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[AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.]

A LIFE AT STAKE.

By LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XXV

Think'st thou there dwells no courage but in breasts
That set their mail against the ringing spear,
When helmets are struck down? Thou little knowest
Of nature's marvels. Mrs. Hemans.

As the little party of adventurers rode quietly onwards through the hush and silence of the night, with the breezes whispering solemnly from the bending trees of the forest-like park, the stars shining tranquilly down through the over-arching foliage, Ilde felt assured that the right would yet triumph over the wrong, and that her exertions in her father's behalf would be blessed by Him who notes even the faintest emotions of the human heart.

With her courage quickening into new life, the blood coursing more evenly in her veins, a strange tranquillity creeping over her mind, she rode on, her bright eyes uplifted, as if drinking in strength from the loveliness of the night, and her soul absorbed in self-communion.

Her friend, Kate Arsdale, made no attempt to intrude upon Ilde's silence. With her hand upon the rein, and her eyes fixed steadily upon the path they were pursuing, she relinquished all care and thought to Ilde, content to follow her guidance.

In this manner they neared Eden Lake, where Sir Allyn's daughter had twice encountered Lord Tressilian, and where she had learned from him the sweet old story of love.

The tender influences lingering about the spot made themselves felt by Ilde even now, and she drooped her gaze and looked lovingly upon the scene, while her cheeks burned hotly, and she turned her head away slightly, as if fearing that her friend might read her face by the starlight.

Eden Lake had never looked lovelier in the full glow of sunshine than it did now when bathed in the liquid, silvery glow of the faint night-light, its bosom reflecting the fringing trees and the myriad stars,

and its gay little boat-house. Kate Arsdale surveyed it with renewed appreciation, then uttered a frightened exclamation.

"What is it, dear?" questioned Ilde, aroused from her pleasant trance.

"I am sure I see a man yonder, lying on the bank," was the agitated response. "Look, Ilde; he raises his head and looks at us. Who can he be? What can he be doing in Eden Park, and at this hour?"

Ilde glanced in the direction indicated, and beheld the figure of a man stretched in a careless attitude upon the ground on the spot where she had first seen Lord Tressilian. He had raised his head, and was supporting it upon his hand, while he quietly surveyed the little party of night-riders.

Miss Dare, in a flutter of anxiety, checked her horse at once. Her friend did the same, and they waited until the old groom, who was but a few paces behind, came up, and they then engaged in a brief consultation.

"It is important that this adventure should remain unknown," declared Ilde, uneasily. "But at the very outset we are threatened with discovery. He may have already recognized us. What can we do, Jarkin?"

"Let me go on ahead, Miss Dare," replied the groom, sturdily. "In my opinion the man's a poacher, and he won't mention this meeting for his own sake. If he ain't a poacher, I'll give him a blow and stun him like, and I wouldn't give a farthing for his memory after that."

He essayed to pass his young mistress, but she detained him. She had been watching the indolent intruder, who, at the very moment of Jarkin's threatening, appeared to start violently, and who had now sprung up lightly, and was advancing towards the little party at a swift and easy gait.

Kate Arsdale uttered a faint scream.

But Ilde, with blushes scarcely to be seen in the starlight, recognized the object of her recent terror at once as the Viscount Tressilian.

Her instinct even more than her eyesight assured her of his identity, and a delicious sense of embarrassment crept over her, and she pulled at her reins,

uncertain whether to beat a hasty retreat or to meet him.

A conviction, however, that he had already recognized her decided her to pursue the latter course.

A word to Jarkin caused him to fall back, but he stationed himself close behind her, in a threatening attitude, ready to leap from his horse at the slightest indication that a defender was needed.

Lord Tressilian came up, advanced to Ilde's side, and, with an expression of astonishment, exclaimed: "It is you, then, Miss Dare? I thought at first that I must be experiencing an optical illusion. I was not certain but that my imagination had conjured up the welcome apparition, but the sight of Miss Arsdale and your attendant convinced me to the contrary. This is a strange hour for a ride."

"It is, indeed," returned Ilde, endeavouring to avoid the keen, clear glance of her lover. "It is a strange hour also for a stroll in a neighbour's park, is it not?"

"You can imagine why I am here, Ilde," whispered the young viscount, leaning his hand upon her horse's neck and drawing nearer to her. "The scene hallowed by our first meeting is the dearest spot in the world to me. This is not the first night I have haunted this place, living over again our meetings, and endeavouring to derive hope and comfort for the future from your remembered words. My heart was heavy to-night, and I fancied I might lighten it of its burden here, and plan out a future in which I should be more than a match for Therwell. But you, Ilde," and his voice trembled with hopefulness, "did you come here to dream of me? Of course not," he added, his tone sinking to one of disappointment, "or you would not come attended. Tell me where are you going?"

Ilde hesitated, and then said, confusedly:

"I cannot tell you, Gay!"

"Not tell me?" he repeated, in surprise. Then, with a look of gentle authority that well became his dark, bright face, and with a tender persuasiveness of manner, he added: "But you must tell me, my darling! Do you think I can let you wander about at midnight with no protector but your groom?"

"You must trust my judgment and sense, Gay," returned the maiden, meeting his gaze frankly. "I am going, with my father's approval, to search for something the possession of which is necessary to his happiness and his life. I cannot now tell you more. But do not detain us longer. Every moment spent here is a lost opportunity. Some day you shall know all!"

"In your own good time, dear Ilde," responded her lover, with a look of trust and faith. "I shall not seek to intrude into your confidence. Nor will I delay you any longer. I will walk beside you to the lower gate, outside which I left my horse!"

He relinquished his hold upon Ilde's horse, exchanged greetings with Miss Arsdale, apologizing for his previous inattention to her, spoke kindly to the old groom, who had recognized him with a look of delight, and who now retreated, musing upon the hopes he had once, with all the Dares retainers, entertained that the families of the Dares and Tressilians might be united through the youngest scions of the respective houses.

The young girls and the viscount kept up a desultory conversation as they proceeded through the park, discussing the loveliness of the night, and various other subjects far removed from the thoughts agitating each breast. On reaching the gate Ilde gave the key to Lord Tressilian, who unlocked it, and after the whole party had passed through locked it again, putting the key into his own pocket.

His horse was standing where he had left him, tied beneath the shade of a spreading tree, and impatiently champing the earth. The young nobleman went up to him, soothed him by a word and a touch, untied him, leaped upon his back, and then rode back to Ilde.

"Miss Dare," he said, as she extended her gauntleted hand in token of farewell, "I beg you will permit me to become your escort. You must be running many dangers in undertaking an adventure like this. You do not know whom you may meet on the way, or encounter at your journey's end. There can be no possible impropriety in my becoming the fourth of your party, any more than if I were your brother. Shall I not go, Ilde?"

The maiden hesitated, especially as Kate Arsdale looked at her beseechingly, and Jarkin was heard to mutter his approval of the request.

"If you refuse me," continued the viscount, quietly, "I shall be compelled to follow your steps at a little distance and alone. I could not sleep if I were to go home, aware of your exposure to danger, and I shall either go with you or follow you. Which shall it be?"

Ilde still remained undecided, when, glancing up the road, in the direction of Edencourt, she beheld Hoadley, the innkeeper, advancing rapidly, as if desirous of making himself acquainted with the members of the little group. Her decision was made at once.

"Go with us, Lord Tressilian!" she said, quickly. "And now we must hurry on our way. Come!"

She set the example by giving the rein to her fleet Arabian, and her companions followed suit. In a few moments the baffled innkeeper had become lost to view. The little party, avoiding the village of Edenville, took a road that skirted it, and were soon fairly on their way to Oakshaw.

For some time silence prevailed. The maidens felt a sense of additional security in the presence of Lord Tressilian, and Kate Arsdale resumed her reverie with increased satisfaction, while Ilde thought long and earnestly upon the affairs at present claiming her attention. The young nobleman had no wish to break the charmed silence. It was rapture to him to ride beside Ilde, to look upon her glorious beauty unobserved and unrebuked, to watch the play of expression upon her features, and to note the resolute curve of her red, sweet mouth. He forgot, in his present enjoyment, the difficulties of his own pecuniary affairs, forgot everything except that he loved the daughter of Sir Allyn Dare and his resolution never to relinquish her to another.

They rode swiftly along over country roads, bordered by hedges, through green country lanes, shadowed by drooping willows, over rustic stone bridges, and once or twice through small hamlets, from the windows of which night-capped heads looked out in wild amazement upon the fleet night-riders, and then retreated pale with alarm. They avoided the towns and villages upon their route, keeping to the retired roads whenever practicable. The groom knew the road to Oakshaw well, but Lord Tressilian proved a still better guide, for he was acquainted with all the bye-lanes and paths across the desolate commons, by traversing which several miles of the journey were saved. Ilde had thus good reason to congratulate herself that she had accepted his escort.

They passed lonely country houses wrapped in gloom, dwellings in which a single light burning dimly told them of a sick-bed and a pale watcher

mansions brilliantly lighted and giving forth sounds of music, mirth and revelry, and at last a beautiful cottage-orndé, its windows all lighted, appearing from between a very bower of foliage.

Ilde looked at this house with intense interest. "That is the house where the late Admiral Wilmer lived," said Lord Tressilian, marking her change of expression. "It has been closed for years, but was opened the other day for the reception of Miss Wilmer, who has recovered from her long insanity, as I heard to-day at Edenville from a native of West Hoxton. There seems to be some mystery about Miss Wilmer, and there is a report of a secret marriage in order to save her property from falling into the hands of a relative, but the name of her husband is unknown."

"I must call upon her very soon," said Ilde. "The few miles between her home and Edencourt need not be a barrier to social and friendly intercourse. Papa used to exchange visits with Admiral Wilmer. Indeed, we are really neighbours, Miss Wilmer and I, and I hope we shall be friends."

She sighed faintly as she remembered why she desired the friendship of Miss Wilmer—her principal reason being her wish to discover the whereabouts of Shawcross, the third witness against her father. But she had at heart a longing also to comfort the maiden whose life had been shadowed by supposed insanity, and to minister with loving care to that mind from which, possibly, the gloom had not entirely departed.

She kept her eyes fixed upon Monrepos as if loth to withdraw them, and even turned her head and regarded it long after she had passed it. But when its lights became hidden from her view by intervening trees she thought of her journey's end and devoted her thoughts to devising her course when she should have arrived at Oakshaw.

The travellers skirted West Hoxton, and continued their journey, but no longer in complete silence. Encouraged by the unspoken sympathy of her lover, Ilde told him something of the object of her journey, and requested his assistance in searching for the important paper. She told him also of the conversation she had overheard in Edencourt gardens between Therwell and Hoadley, proving that an actual conspiracy existed against Sir Allyn, and confided to him the assurances of the mysterious seamstress concerning the mahogany box, in which the paper possibly might be concealed.

"I should like to know who Mrs. Amry is," she said, thoughtfully, when she had concluded her recital. "There is a mystery about her which I cannot fathom. She has known Therwell, it is evident, but where, and when, and under what circumstances? And for why does she desire revenge?"

"Perhaps she is his wife whom he has deserted," suggested Lord Tressilian.

"It cannot be, for she is older than he is—much older. Her hair is gray and her face is wrinkled. I am sure she cannot be his wife. Besides, he is too cautious to think of marrying again with one wife in existence."

"Then she may be his mother?"

"Impossible!" said Ilde. "They do not look in the least alike. Besides, no mother would have pursued her son for years with thoughts of revenge. I have canvassed already the two possibilities you have suggested, Gay, and I am convinced that both are more than improbable. No, there is some deeper mystery in her hatred than anything we can understand or surmise. It remains only to wait and see. Perhaps time will solve it."

She patted her horse gently, and he sprang away, at her behest, arching his neck and bearing his lovely rider with proud grace. Kate Arsdale and Lord Tressilian kept at her side, but the brief conversation had been broken, and was not renewed.

The long and rapid ride at length drew near its close. The walls of a grim and gray old mansion, flanked by two ivy-clad round towers, arose before them, and Lord Tressilian declared this mansion to be that of Oakshaw.

"I know it well," he said, as Ilde slackened her pace. "It was once the residence of a friend of my father, and I have explored nearly every nook and corner within its boundaries. I hope we shall not find many servants in possession."

Ilde and Kate echoed the hope, and the former scanned the eastern horizon with anxious eyes. It was not quite three hours since they had quitted Edencourt, and there was as yet no sign of the morning's dawn.

"We have a couple of hours before us, Gay," she said. "During that time we can certainly accomplish our object; don't you think so?"

To Lord Tressilian, who did not thoroughly comprehend its necessity, the expedition had something of a Quixotic air, but he concealed his own convictions, replying that if they failed it should not be because they deserved it.

The mansion had now become plainly visible, and the entire party regarded it anxiously. It was as grim and gray on nearer view as when seen from a distance, and there were signs of decay about the double portico, the white-washed walls, and tottering chimneys. On three sides was a plain, open lawn; on the fourth an overgrown and ill-kept shrubbery. The dwelling stood at no great distance from the road, and the travellers observed piles of brick and mortar littering the ground, as if repairs were in course of execution.

Lord Tressilian derived an idea from the latter fact at once.

With a keen glance up and down the road, he ordered a halt in the shade of the shrubbery, and said:

"There is a broken place in the palings shutting in these trees, and Jarkin had better take the horses in there, and keep guard over them. They can rest there, and be ready for our use should we require them suddenly. While he is thus occupied we will seek an entrance into the house. Perhaps the workmen who have undertaken the repairs may have left some available spot of ingress."

The girls acceded to this plan at once, and alighted from their tired steeds, gathering up the skirts of their habits.

The viscount conducted the groom to the broken palings, and himself selected a little dell, surrounded by tall young trees, as a hiding-place for the horses and their guardian.

"You will be secure here, Jarkin," he said, "from observation of passers-by as well as from that of the inmates of the dwelling. Wait for us here."

The man promised obedience, and Lord Tressilian returned to the expectant girls.

They were pacing up and down in the shade, rejoicing over the deep shadows that had succeeded the brilliant starlight, and declaring their belief that it would be easy to reach the house unseen. Lord Tressilian confirmed their words as he came up, and proposed that they should make the attempt at once.

He led the way, opening the little lawn gate noiselessly, and the maidens followed him, their faces blanched and their hearts throbbing with excitement.

There were a few small trees here and there, and Lord Tressilian fitted from one to another of these, the two girls imitating his movements, and all gradually nearing the house. Keeping a vigilant watch upon the various windows, moving with the utmost caution, forbearing even to speak to each other, they at length gained the shade of the portico.

"So far, so good," said the young nobleman, calmly, wiping his humid brows. "Sit down, young ladies, while I go upon an exploring tour. I shall expect to find you here when I return."

Without waiting for a reply he glided away in the direction of the mansion, and the two girls sat down upon a broad step, and congratulated each other in whispers that their journey had been so soon and well performed.

"I am sure we shall be successful, dear Ilde," said Kate, pressing the hand of her friend. "If we get the paper you want, and you can find that Shawcross and bribe him to act rightly, how happy we shall be! You will turn Therwell out of doors, reward Mrs. Amry, and give a grand ball, and marry Lord Tressilian, and I shall be bridesmaid, and you will be presented at Court, and Sir Allyn will recover his health and spirits—"

She paused, as Ilde raised her pale, excited face that seemed to shine from out the gloom.

"Hush, dear," said the baronet's daughter. "I must not think of the future now. It would unnerve me to contrast your picture of papa the terrible reality if I should fail."

At this juncture Tressilian crept back to them, his dark face glowing, his manner eager, and his breathing hard.

"I have found a place by which we can enter," he exclaimed. "Providence is surely befriending us."

He extended a hand to each, and conducted them over heaps of masonry, around the corner of the house, and paused before a doorway, filled up by a rude, temporary door.

He had evidently already tried the strength of the latter, and found out its available points of weakness, for, after a few judicious blows, it yielded to him, and would have fallen in with a crash had he not caught it. He assisted the young ladies to enter, and then replaced the door.

His next movement was to light the dark lantern delivered into his hands by the old groom, and to survey the scene around him. The maidens also looked curiously around them.

They found themselves in a bare-looking corridor, of which the walls had been freshly plastered, and the oaken floor sprinkled with hard spots of dried cement. The air was very damp, and with one common impulse they noiselessly passed on to the

end of the passage and looked into the wide hall to which it led.

There was nothing here to attract attention, except several doors on either side, and the maidens followed Lord Tressilian closely as he opened each of these doors in turn and looked into the various rooms.

They consisted of drawing-rooms and sitting-rooms, all unfurnished, and either undergoing repair or having just been through it. There did not seem the remotest possibility that the important paper for which they were searching could be hidden in any of them.

"This part of the house is evidently uninhabited," whispered Lord Tressilian as they finished their fruitless investigation. "We must explore the corridor yonder, opposite to that by which we entered."

They hastened to carry out this suggestion. The passage alluded to proved to be lined with doors, which on being opened revealed rooms suitable for habitation, and bearing marks of occupancy.

"If you will remain here a few minutes, young ladies," said Lord Tressilian, as they looked into a comfortably furnished little breakfast-room, "I will make a farther exploration, and try to learn how many servants are employed here, and where Therwell's rooms are situated. If you would be afraid—"

A glance at Ilde's brave and earnest countenance checked him, and he glided away, lantern in hand, leaving the maidens in darkness.

"I—I believe I am afraid, Ilde!" whispered Kate, clinging to her friend. "I wish Lord Tressilian would stay with us! What if someone should find us here!"

Ilde strove to reassure her friend, but more by a silent pressure of the hand than by words. The deep gloom of the room, the oppressive solitude of the place, the possibility of discovery, all were not without their effect upon the baronet's daughter; but she was sustained by the reflection that she was incurring danger for her father's sake, and that she was trying to earn her own freedom from bonds more hateful than death.

Ten, fifteen minutes passed, and then light footsteps were heard in the corridor, and the faint gleams of a light were perceptible. Kate clung closer to Ilde, who smiled upon her, assuring her that the viscount was returning. The next moment Lord Tressilian entered.

"I have been all over the inhabited part of the house," he said, "but have not had time to examine any room thoroughly. I have discovered that only two servants are employed here, and one of them is a man. They occupy rooms where they cannot fail to hear the least noise, if they are easily aroused, so we must be very cautious. I have also discovered Therwell's rooms. It is there we shall find the paper if it be in the house. The servant's rooms are very near his, as if he expected them to act as guard over his private possessions!"

"That seems to indicate that he has something valuable," said Ilde, hopefully, as her lover led the way to Therwell's rooms.

They passed up a broad staircase, into an upper corridor, and thence into a suite of rooms, the windows of which looked out upon one of the towers. These rooms were well furnished, hung with pictures, and carpeted with soft, thick fabrics that deadened the intruders' footsteps. A quantity of eastern pipes on the table, a china tobacco-jar beside them, a pair of embroidered slippers near the window, and a large dressing-gown of the gayest colours upon the back of a chair, proved that the first room of the suite was the private apartment of Therwell himself. The second room was a dressing-room, and the third was a bed-chamber.

In one of the three, probably, was hidden the written evidence by means of which Therwell could crush her father and destroy her happiness.

Thus thinking, Ilde engaged at once in the search. The curtains were drawn across the windows, the wax-candles upon the mantel-piece lighted, and the three set to work to explore the chambers thoroughly. Lord Tressilian devoted his attention to the closets and heavy pieces of furniture; Kate Arsdale examined the backs of pictures carefully; and Ilde looked into every vase, probed the chair-cushions and ottomans, and searched particularly for the peculiar box which Mrs. Amry had described.

It soon became evident that the box was not in the parlour, and Lord Tressilian remarked that it was improbable that Therwell should have carried the box with him for years throughout his various journeyings; and that, in his opinion, the document was hidden in some article of furniture.

Half an hour's earnest investigation convinced them that the paper could not be in the first room, and they proceeded to the second. Here a desk attracted attention, and Ilde examined it, while Kate busied herself with the furniture and Lord Tressilian passed into the bed-room.

The desk was large and fitted up with innume-

erable divisions, in each of which were packets of papers, letters, &c. Ilde looked over them with a wild hope of finding the document thrust carelessly into an envelope or tied in one of the packets; but her hope was vain. She then looked for letters from her father, which might possibly tend to criminate him, but none were there. She searched every nook, sounded the walls of the desk, but all in vain.

As she was about to desist and turn her attention elsewhere a packet of letters fell from some hidden nook, and she took them up eagerly, believing that among them was hidden the written compact. They proved, however, to be simply letters, written in a woman's hand.

"Perhaps they have something to do with Mrs. Amry," mused Ilde, holding them in her hand. "I have a conviction that they somehow have reference to me!"

She untied the packet, and perused the letters. They were all very brief, and signed simply "M. G." They were the farthest possible remove from love-letters, being couched in business terms, and always to the effect that "it" was quite safe, and that the writer desired more money. One of the letters was signed "Your sister, M. G.," and nearly all were addressed to "My dear brother."

"I did not know Therwell had a sister," said Ilde, half aloud. "So I have made one discovery, even if unimportant. What can she mean by 'it'? Not the paper, of course—yet why not? If we do not find it here I shall believe that he has placed it in the care of his sister!"

She replaced the letters as she had found them and arose wearily from the desk. Kate was busy with a chest of drawers, and Lord Tressilian was still in the bed-chamber, engaged in noiseless explorations. With a glance at her friend Ilde went to the window and looked out.

The East was bathed in a cold gray light, fore-runner of the coming day. There were two or three beams of red at the very edge of the horizon, heralding the approach of the sun. The barn-yard fowls were crowing their delight at the termination of night, and the birds were making melody among the trees.

"It is morning and I have not yet succeeded," said Ilde, almost despairing, as she quitted the window.

"Come here, dear," exclaimed Kate, who was standing before an antique piece of furniture in the corner. "I have explored everything but this cabinet. Do you think it can be here?"

She pulled open one of the doors with a little difficulty and had hardly done so when the cabinet fell to the floor with a crash. Alarmed at the noise Lord Tressilian hurried in from the bed-chamber.

"I did not mean to do it," said Kate, looking from Ilde to the viscount, deprecatingly. "It is not my fault. The cabinet is so very old."

"No, it is not your fault, Kate," said Lord Tressilian, stooping to examine the cabinet. "It had but three legs to stand upon, and when you opened the door you pulled it off its balance. I hope no one heard the noise."

"The servants are probably in their morning slumbers, when they are least likely to wake," said Ilde. "Is there anything in the cabinet, Gay?"

"Nothing but dust," was the reply. "The cabinet must have belonged to the former owners of Oakshaw, and the servants have put it there, thinking it valuable."

"You have found nothing in the bedroom?"

"No, Ilde; and I have searched thoroughly. I was about to return when I heard the crash made by the falling cabinet. No paper can possibly be hidden in there. You have had no success?"

"None," was Ilde's sad reply. "But I have found a few letters which may tend to throw some light upon the object of our search."

She went to the desk and brought out the letters that attracted her attention. Lord Tressilian took them and read them, Kate Arsdale holding the lantern, so that its full red light beamed upon the papers, and Ilde, with one hand on her lover's arm, read them anew and looked up into his face, as if expecting to find his opinion written there.

It was at this juncture, when the three were absorbed in the perusal of the letters, that a startled face looked at the little group from the doorway of the parlour for a single moment and then disappeared as silently as it had come.

Not one of the trio had seen it.

"Evidently," said Lord Tressilian, as he finished the letters and gave them to Ilde, "these letters refer to a matter of importance. This sister of Therwell's is paid for keeping something safe. Very probably it is this written compact, Ilde. In fact I almost believe it to be so. We must find out who his sister is and where she lives."

"I have already resolved upon that," said Ilde, quietly

"I am satisfied that the paper we want is not here. If you are equally satisfied, dear Ilde, we had better leave Oakshaw at once."

"Yes, we will go!" responded Ilde, with a despairing accent.

Lord Tressilian drew her to his side, whispering comforting words, and Kate begged her to be as hopeful as she had hitherto been. Talking thus, they gained the outer room and endeavoured to open the door.

It was locked from without!

The dressing-room also communicated with the hall, but that door was locked also. They sought various modes of egress, but the conviction soon flashed across their minds—they were prisoners!

CHAPTER XXVI.

I heard thy light, careless farewell, love,
And patiently saw thee depart—
Aye, patiently. But could words tell, love,
The sorrow that swelled in my heart?
Yet tearless and still though I stood, love,
Thy last words are thrilling me yet,
And my lips would now breathe if they could, love,
The deep prayer—"Oh, do not forget!"

Clare.

HAD Miss Chellis lingered but a few minutes longer in the shadow of the little grove and listened but a brief space longer to the interview between Sir Hugh and his young bride it is highly probable that her satisfaction would have greatly diminished, and she would have regarded her proposed mediation as both necessary and desirable.

The young couple stood for a few moments in silence, after Adah had extended her hand shyly to her lover—husband—he holding it in his with rapture and gazing at her lovely face, whose beauty was heightened by the rose-tints of shame and embarrassment that mantled on her cheeks—while she endeavoured to regain her composure and self-command.

Her efforts were speedily successful.

Pale and calm, but not less beautiful than before, she raised her earnest eyes to his face, withdrew her hand gently, and said:

"We are friends, then, Sir Hugh?"
"Nothing but friends, Miss Wilmer—Adah—that is Lady Chellis?" he stammered, confused at her unexpected change of manner.

"Nothing but friends," she answered, in a clear, calm voice. "Did you really think, Sir Hugh, that we could be more than friends to each other? You have strangely misapprehended me."

"I—I thought my arguments had convinced you—"

"They have convinced me of nothing except that our lives should be apart," was the response. "Did you really think me so lost to maidenly delicacy, Sir Hugh Chellis, as to believe that I would accept the society and protection of a husband whom I gained in a manner of which I cannot even think without blushes?"

"But I begged you to take back that miserable bribe," he pleaded, his fair face almost as pale as hers and fully as earnest. "It is I who have to blush—not you. Your conduct has been indelicate nor unwomanly. Oh, Adah, if I could but have met you before, if I could but have known you. I have never loved till now, but I love you with my whole soul. I feel to the very depths of my being a conviction that you are the bride intended for me by destiny."

"Yet you know nothing of me."

"Years of acquaintance are not required to tell me how good and pure you are. I can read your noble soul in your eyes. The daughter of Admiral Wilmer could be nothing less than good, true and pure."

Adah's lips quivered, and she looked up gratefully, a tear glistening her long lashes.

"The romantic circumstances attending our acquaintance," she said, "have invested me with a factitious interest in your mind, Sir Hugh. Had you met me in society you would have passed me by as you have done others. Do not plead for what I cannot give, I beg of you. We can never be more to each other than we are now. I will tell you why."

She sat down upon the bench from which she had recently arisen, and motioned him to a seat beside her, but he shook his head and remained standing, leaning his tall figure against a tree, and looking down upon her with a yearning and sorrowful gaze.

The heart of the young bride pleaded strongly for him at that moment. The quivering of his proud lips, the tremulous light in his blue eyes, the passion expressed in his fair, handsome face, all appealed to her—but in vain. Her pride arose counter to the dawning love in her soul, fought with it, and conquered.

"Sir Hugh," she said, after a brief pause, during

which the melody of the birds and the music of the tinkling brook floated softly into the little dell, unheard by either, "I will be frank with you. I will lay bare my soul to your scrutiny, and you will then say that I am right in my decision. During the years of my imprisonment by my late guardian I was well supplied with books and music, both of which resources went to foster in me a love of self-communion. I dreamed pleasant dreams. I knew why Mr. Wilmer kept me shut up on a charge of insanity, and I used to fancy that I should yet defeat his designs, that I should be delivered from his bonds by some gallant gentleman, whom I would marry, and endow with my fortune as a sort of reward for his chivalry."

"Well?" questioned the young baronet, as she paused, as if reluctant to continue.

"I pictured an ideal gentleman, brave, strong, and resolute," she continued, forcing herself to go on, "a sort of Chevalier Bayard, I suppose," and she smiled faintly, "or a Sidney. I imagined one who scoffed at dangers, surmounted obstacles, who was noble in every action of his life, who was, in short, pure and without fear and without reproach. No doubt you think me foolish, Sir Hugh," she added, blushing. "I daresay I am. Had my life been less solitary I should probably have been less romantic in my fancies."

Sir Hugh had listened to her with kindling face and glowing eyes. He now spoke eagerly, and in impassioned tones:

"Adah—Lady Chellis," he exclaimed, "your ideal would only be worthy of you, and I cannot claim to resemble it. I have been wild and foolish. I have wasted my patrimony upon men who are not worthy to be my associates. I have lived riotously, like the prodigal son—but, after all, there is good in me. I feel at times noble impulses stirring within my soul. I know that I am capable of better things than I have yet accomplished. The love of a pure and true woman would be my redemption. I am not very intellectual, I have no great ambition, I have not the capacity to achieve fame. I am simply an ordinary young man. But, Adah, you could make me good if you would only love me and have faith in me!"

Lady Chellis looked up into his eager eyes, so like the blue of the summer sky, and, observing the strong, resolute soul that beamed forth from them, almost believed that her ideal lover stood before her. His very humility was a charm in her eyes, and tended to increase his resemblance to the human angel she had fancied.

But she shook her head sadly.

"Marriage," she said, in a low tone, "should be founded upon a basis of mutual esteem. In the most happy unions there may be at times differences of opinion, and, at such times, any fault on either side is remembered and magnified into a grave error. If we were to accept our marriage as a union of our hearts as well as hands, and coldness were ever to arise between us, you would not fail to recall our meeting at the door of the money-lender, your despair, and the bribe by which I tempted you. You might, perhaps, taunt me with being forward, bold, and unwomanly—"

"Never, Adah—never!" he interrupted, impetuously. "I am no Bayard or Sidney," and his tone was full of bitterness, "but I have, at least, the instincts of a gentleman. I am too honourable to taunt anyone with what was not a fault—and least of all could I taunt a lady—a helpless woman—whose defencelessness would appeal to my sympathies and forbearance, whatever she might do. You wrong and misjudge me, Lady Chellis!"

"I grant that I may have done so, Sir Hugh. But my resolution is made, and the expression of your transitory fancy must not cause me to falter in it. We made a fair and business-like bargain," and Lady Chellis endeavoured to render her manner cold and calm, "and it is best that we abide by the terms of our agreement. I will not take back the money placed to your credit, as you have requested. It is but a small recompense for the loss of your liberty."

"I will not keep it!" interposed the young baronet. "So long as I retain it I shall feel it to be a tangible barrier between you and me. With that got rid of, I may hope to show you that I am at least disinterested in my professions of love!"

"I believe it already," the young bride was tempted to say, but she conquered the impulse, saying only, "I have said that I will not accept the money, and I must repeat the assertion. And now, permit me to hope, Sir Hugh, that the discussion of love is ended between us."

"It is, since you desire it," responded Sir Hugh, his usually firm lips quivering, despite his efforts at self-control. "I will not force a distasteful subject upon you, Lady Chellis. But if at any time I can prove my devotion to you I will do it. I can say no more."

"And you are not angry with me?"

"Angry with you, Adah—Lady Chellis? No, I am

not angry at your decision, and I do not wonder at it. I feel that I am unworthy of such a priceless treasure as your love. I will try to make myself better for your sake, with the hope that at some future time you may look kindly upon me. Before I go I have one request to make."

"Name it!" said Adah, tremulously.

"It is that you will adopt my name, and permit my aunt to remain with you. Such a course would silence scandal, would add to your security, and establish your position. I solemnly promise you that I will never take advantage of your condescension in assuming your rightful name and title, and will never intrude my presence upon you unless when you yourself request it."

"But if I call myself Lady Chellis," said the young bride, "people will wonder why I do not live with my husband."

"Let them wonder. Surely that would be better than to have the world discussing your marriage and the retention of your maiden name. Better come out honestly and at once by your rightful name. My aunt's presence here will baffle all speculations as to the truth, and I—I will go to Wales, or abroad."

"I will follow your advice," said the fair young bride, arising. "The matter is settled then. I regret that I cannot ask you to visit me again, Sir Hugh, but it would not be fair to Miss Chellis to send you away now before you can pay your respects to her. Come in, and take luncheon with us. Before we part for ever let us break bread together after the Arab fashion."

Sir Hugh accepted the invitation at once, and offered her his arm, which she silently declined. Side by side, with grave faces, they passed through the grove and walked towards the dwelling, the young baronet bending courteously to his bride, and she experiencing a sentiment of gratitude at his delicate kindness.

Their approach was witnessed by Miss Chellis, who was seated in the projecting window, looking out anxiously for their coming, and her delight may be imagined when she saw them coming to the house together, but it was slightly dampened by the gravity of their countenances. It was observed also by many of the old servants, who were inclined to greet the husband of their young mistress with cheers, and were only prevented by the more judicious Watkins. Many encomiums were passed, however, among the faithful and sympathetic retainers respecting the noble and manly appearance of Sir Hugh, who, they all hoped, would rule over them.

Conscious of the eyes that were upon them, the young couple entered the house and sought the drawing-room, from which Lady Chellis soon after retired, leaving grand-aunt and grand-nephew alone. In the sympathetic bosom of the withered fairy Sir Hugh confided the story of the morning's events, and received her warmest commiseration.

"Dear, dear," said the little old lady, bringing down her staff with a heavy sound, "how foolish young folks are, to be sure. It wasn't so when I was young. You must have mismanaged the business dreadfully, Hugh. You always were a blunderer. And Adah is the dearest and most spirited creature in the world, but she is proud and doesn't know what she wants. A Chevalier Bayard forsooth. There are not many of that sort of men in the world now," and Miss Dorothy smiled gravely. "Dear, deary me, if it were not for me you two young ninnies would spoil all your happiness for life. Thank fortune I've no false delicacy about putting my nose into other people's business. I always had a taste for meddling, and I've got a chance to cultivate it at last!"

"But, Aunt Dorothy," expostulated the young baronet, "it would be wrong to annoy her. I daresay she is right after all. I know I am not worthy of her. And if I did not fear that she would meet someone better than I am and repent her marriage bonds—"

"Fiddlestick!" interrupted Miss Dorothy, testily. "No wonder Adah did not want you since you are so willing to let her go. I wish I had been a man and in your place. I would have shown you a different conclusion to the story. Not worthy? Humph! It's true you are a young scapegrace!" she added, hastily, as if fearing to elate him by her previous ejaculation; "but, bless me, you can grow better, can't you? Leave the matter in my hands, Hugh. We'll see if old Aunt Dorothy can't do something!"

The little old spinster's words did not tend greatly to encourage her grand-nephew. He listened to her respectfully, as in duty bound, but his face continually wandered to the door, as if anxious for the return of his young bride. But she did not make her appearance until the luncheon hour; then she came in, elegantly attired, and looking haughty, dignified, proud and inaccessible. She greeted her husband kindly, however, and even laid her hand lightly

on his arm as they passed into the breakfast-room together.

At the table she talked brilliantly, performing the duties of hostess admirably, receiving Miss Dorothy's caustic remarks with pleasant smiles and unceasing good-humour, and treating Sir Hugh as an honoured guest. But when, the repast over, they stood in the portico, and the young baronet extended his hand in adieu, her face paled a little, and an earnest expression appeared in her dark eyes.

"Remember, Adah," he whispered, softly, with lover-like earnestness, "if you ever need a friend call upon me. Although I am no Bayard I would gladly shed my last drop of blood in your defence!"

And with those last words of mingled love and reproach he wrung her hand, ran down the steps and hurried away, while the young bride looked after him through a mist of tears, and asked her own heart if she had done well. At the gate Sir Hugh paused and looked back, and the picture that met his gaze and fixed itself on his memory was the drooping figure of his fair bride in the foreground, while a little behind her, making encouraging gestures, and leaning upon her staff, was Miss Dorothy.

(To be continued.)

A WHOLE tribe of inhabitants of Morocco has arrived in Paris. The beauty of the women astonishes everyone, and they go uncovered there, while in their own native land they hide their beauty.

His Highness the Viceroy of Egypt has given the sum of 1500*l.* to the valuable institution the Royal Hospitable for Incurables. The present hospital (Melrose Hall, Putney Heath) was, in 1862, the temporary residence of his Highness the late Viceroy of Egypt.

A BLIND fiddler, who for twenty years had played in the streets of Vienna, recently died. After his death a will drawn up in due form was found in his chamber, by which he bequeathed 10,000 florins to his nephew, and 6,000 florins to a female who used to conduct him through the streets. The money, consisting of bank-notes, silver, and one thousand of the smallest coins, was all found.

ALL the military bands of the world have been trying their best to rival each other at Paris—the English excepted—and it is just as well that they all kept out of the way, for they are one and all nowhere in music. The Austrians very naturally and honestly received the prize—namely, the Austrian regiment the Duke of Wurttemberg. Anyone who has heard an Austrian band in its glory cannot doubt the value of this decision.

THE VITALITY OF SEEDS.—A remarkable instance of the well-known vitality of seeds may be now seen at the Paris Exhibition, a great variety of plants foreign to France having sprung up under the walls and around the buildings in the park, the seeds of which have been conveyed to Paris in packages from various countries. Especially around the house of "Gustavus Wassa" several plants may be seen which are peculiar to the country of that monarch.

It is said that since he has returned to the Continent the Sultan has spoken of the happiest moment of his visit to England. People will imagine it was on Wimbledon Common, on the river, or at the fireworks, or when he was in presence of the magnificent civic magnates. Not so; his Imperial Majesty, with a truly Oriental tone of thought, says it was a moment when a kiss was given. That kiss was given by the gracious Sovereign of England to his son.

TURKISH FINANCE.—The amount for which the Turkish national property, consisting of mines, forests, and rivers, is to be mortgaged, is not 10,000,000*l.*, as previously stated, but 20,000,000*l.* A concession for raising this sum has been granted for a term of ninety-nine years, the Porte reserving (after the first nine or ten years) a share in the proceeds derived from the estates. The money to be paid for this lease is to be remitted in instalments spread over a period of eight or nine years. The matter, however, has not yet been definitely settled.

DYING OF THIRST.—Strange to say, while water has been so abundant all over the country, there is one little spot where people have been dying of thirst. It is said that in the Lachlan back country bodies and skeletons of persons who have perished from want of water are being continually found. It is also related that one man offered a pound-note for half a pint of water, and having got it and swallowed it, offered 20*l.* for a full pint, so great was his thirst. This may be an exaggeration, but still the story passes muster and is generally believed. The track of country alluded to is the only portion of the colony where the rain has not fallen in large quantities.—*Sydney*, May 23*rd.*



[WILKINS IN A DILEMMA.]

SWEET ROSES YANGLED.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ROSA GORDON had sunk back seemingly quite helpless, with an expression of angry despair upon her convulsed features that distorted all their beauty and filled her companion with alarm. Rosa suddenly burst into wild cries, and fell into a violent hysterical spasm. Mrs. Perkins, with much effort, at length succeeded in carrying her to her bed, where she loosened her clothing and administered lavender and sal volatile.

It was an hour before the paroxysms began to subside, and the sufferer lay panting and nerveless for a long time, with her eyes half closed and her pale lips tightly drawn over her teeth.

Suddenly she seemed to remember something that vitally interested her, for she raised her head, looked around and saw the waiting woman sitting at the foot of her bed intently regarding her. Rosa feebly said:

"I have something to attend to that must not be neglected. Bring me a bottle of wine. I must drink enough to nerve me for what lies before me. I shall not give way again, Mrs. Perkins. I feel my strength and will returning and I shall do very well. Pray get me the wine without delay; bring me champagne. That will effectually remove this dreadful feeling of sinking that weighs me down."

Much as Mrs. Perkins disliked Rosa she felt compassion for her in her broken-down and friendless condition, for she had heard of the sudden departure of the Bates family, and she knew that the young girl was left utterly alone to struggle with the overwhelming disappointment she had sustained.

She hastened to bring the wine, though if she could have dreamed of the purpose for which its factitious aid was desired she would sooner have seen Rosa die for the want of it than have been the agent to obtain it for her.

She drank glass after glass till half the bottle was exhausted, then arose and with the woman's assistance arranged her disordered dress and prepared to go out. Mrs. Perkins remonstrated:

"You ain't fit to go in the street, Miss Gordon. You are trembling with weakness now, and, you may be taken with another of them spells before you can walk any distance."

Rosa impatiently replied:

"I am not going to walk. Order me a carriage. I have an engagement to see a friend at five o'clock,

and I must keep it—a great deal depends on it. Will you perform this last service for me, Mrs. Perkins? It is not much to ask of you, and—and I am still able to reward you."

"Of course I'll do it if you insist, Miss Gordon, but I don't want any pay for any little service I may do for you."

"Well, go then, for I have no time to lose. It is half-past four now, and I have some distance to go."

Mrs. Perkins went and returned in a few moments to say that a carriage was at the private entrance. Rosa drew her thick crape veil over her wild-looking face and hastened to enter it. Whither she was going or for what purpose the woman could not divine, for the direction of Rosa to the driver was given in so guarded a tone that she could not hear it. But she had little time to speculate on Rosa's movements, for Mr. Lopez had left orders for her to pack up the personal effects of her late mistress, and have them ready for removal on the following day.

Mrs. Perkins was to return herself to the service of her darling young lady, taking Bijfir with her, to be cared for during the rest of his life.

When the carriage had been driven half a mile Rosa again spoke to the coachman:

"Go a mile farther on the road and draw up on the roadside."

When they gained the place she got out of the vehicle, and, holding her veil close over her face, again spoke to the man:

"Wait here till I come back."

The driver nodded carelessly, secured his reins, and got down to walk about a little.

Rosa made her way through a narrow pathway which a quarter of a mile distant ended in an open space, where a man with his hat drawn over his brows was pacing to and fro. He was apparently awaiting her appearance, for he immediately advanced towards her with alacrity, and lifting his hat revealed the smooth and repulsive face of Sam Wilkins.

He jauntily said:

"Ah, my fair heiress! I had nearly despaired of seeing you here this afternoon. I had almost come to the conclusion that in your elation at the golden shower that has fallen upon you you had forgotten our appointment."

His familiar manner was offensive to Rosa, and she felt a kind of bitter triumph in the blow she was about to give him. She hastened to throw aside her veil and ask:

"Is this the face of a successful plotter. Mr

Wilkins? I did not come before, because I was too ill to leave my own room. Can you guess what has broken me down so utterly?"

The bitter irony with which she spoke enlightened him at once, and he faintly gasped:

"The old woman didn't disappoint you at the last, did she? The will was to be read this morning, and from your note I inferred that all was right."

"So I believed it was when I wrote and made the appointment to meet you here this afternoon, that we might come to some arrangement about the exchange we intended to make. I have nothing to offer you in lieu of the stolen will, for Mrs. Hawks has added a codicil to hers, bequeathing her fortune to the poor of the county in which she was born."

"Then what brought you here at all, Miss Gordon?" he rudely asked. "You did not hope to persuade me into giving the will up to you without the reward you promised?"

"No, sir, I did not expect that," she steadily replied, fixing her glittering eyes full upon him. "I only came hither to warn you against making any use of that instrument. If you attempt to restore it to the Lopez family, however large the reward they may offer, I swear to you that I will expose the whole affair. If I bring ruin on myself by doing so, I will have you prosecuted for the theft you committed, and you may be sure of a long term of imprisonment. I hope you clearly understand me, Mr. Wilkins?"

"If I don't it is not for want of plain speaking," he angrily replied. "You can't be in earnest, Miss Gordon? By exposing me you would disgrace yourself for ever; for of course the compact you made with me would be divulged in such an event."

Rosa coldly replied:

"I should not be punished, for you could prove nothing against me. I might be annoyed a little, but that I could bear, and I declare to you that I was never more deeply in earnest in my life. I care little for the opinion of the world, for I have beauty and wit, which insure me plenty of friends and defenders, but with you it is different. Your business depends on the estimation in which you are held as an honest man, and what I could and would tell must blight you for ever."

Wilkins looked at her determined face and saw that she was terribly serious. After a short pause he insinuatingly said:

"What would you say now, Miss Gordon, if I agree to divide with you whatever the opposite party would give? I am sure it would be a handsome figure, for old Mr. Lopez is wild to get the will in his own posses-

sion. Mr. Manly has been questioning me in such a way, and offering such handsome terms on the part of the old man, that if it hadn't been for my admiration of you I should really have been tempted to betray that I have the paper they are so anxious for. They promise to keep silent, too, about the whole transaction. Come, be reasonable now, don't throw away the chance of a nice little independence because you can't get the whole estate."

Rosa recoiled from his familiar approach as if he had been a leper. Raising her white face to his, she stamped upon the ground and imperiously cried:

"I will die in a ditch sooner than accept a bribe to restore that which will make Inez Lopez the sole possessor of her aunt's fortune. Move in this matter if you dare, and I again asseverate that I will bring ruin upon you—worse than ruin—degradation. Think of that and relinquish all hope of making a fortune by the clever robbery you committed. Ha, ha! I am glad that somebody else has been outwitted as well as myself."

Wilkins looked perfectly crestfallen. He whined: "I don't know how to deal with such a woman as you are, Miss Gordon. Since you cannot be harmed by the will coming to light, I can't see why you should insist that it shall be kept concealed. I have spent money already in this affair, and how am I to get it back unless I sell the thing to those that would give a good price to get it? It isn't fair to treat me so."

"Quite as fair, Mr. Wilkins, as for you to steal the will for the purpose of making a speculation out of it. You are entitled to nothing for your cleverness, and nothing shall you have; I have made up my mind to that. But it grows late, and I must be back in town before night falls. I have given you fair warning of the consequences that will result from any attempt on your part to restore the will to its rightful owners, and I leave you to reflect upon them. You and I shall probably never meet again, unless you violate my commands. Should you do so, you may expect a dire Nemesis to swoop down upon you without delay. Good-evening, sir. I have said all that I came to say, and our interview must terminate."

"Are you inexorable, Miss Gordon?"

"Yes—as death itself; so beware that you do not act contrary to my positive demands."

Wilkins saw from the expression of her face that she meant every word she uttered, and he struck his hand upon his forehead and exclaimed:

"Then heaven help me! for nearly all my savings have gone to feed the prodigality of the poor fool that gave me the clue to this villany. I wish with all my heart that I had never meddled in the affair at all."

Rosa's bitter laugh rang out in reply, and in another moment she was gone.

Threading her way rapidly onwards, she found the driver sitting on a stump whistling "Molly Bawn."

Although the man surveyed her inquisitively, he said nothing, and before the sun had set she was again in her own apartment.

Rosa tried to think—to decide on some plan of action, but the crushing disappointment which had so suddenly ended all her dreams of grandeur seemed to have paralyzed the springs of thought.

Never before had she felt so utterly alone and deserted; and the memory of her late brilliant triumphs in society only added to her desolation. She bitterly regretted now that she had been so precipitate in breaking with the Bates family. Had she acted with more caution she might have kept Adolphus to his troth, and at least have secured a safe position as his wife; but by the arrogant assumption of her presumed fortune she had for ever alienated even the faithful heart of Kitty, and there was no hope left in that quarter.

Unable to endure the tumult of bitter feeling that surged in her bosom, she again had recourse to the champagne, and before her supper was brought in she had emptied the bottle. A cup of tea was all she could take, and she then retired to her bed to toss about half the night with restless moanings she had not strength to suppress.

When Rosa at length slept, frightful dreams of falling over precipices and tossing in a storm at sea kept her weary mind still on the strain, and she awoke feverish and scarcely refreshed by her unquiet slumbers.

But she could not lie in bed; she must be up and preparing for her departure, for she was determined that Fenton should not find her there when he came to superintend the removal of Mrs. Hawks's effects.

With the assistance of Mrs. Perkins, she packed her trunks, and prepared to set out for Mrs. Lyme's, as her only refuge; she felt that she must go there till she could look around and settle on some method of earning her bread, since that necessity was again laid upon her.

A brief note from Kitty Bates had been left in her

room, informing her that the large trunk containing the finery in which she had nightly appeared for so many weeks past was left in the care of the clerk, and Rosa could claim it whenever she pleased. She sent for the young man and requested him to see her safely to the train, at the same time telling him that Mrs. Hawks's account, including her own bill, would be settled by her brother-in-law, Mr. Lopez.

The clerk was very polite; he made every arrangement for her, and found an elderly gentleman travelling to Newhaven, in whose charge he placed her.

With aching head and weary limbs Rosa was borne swiftly away, wondering why she felt so weak and nervous, for she had never been ill in her life, and the premonitory symptoms of approaching illness gave her no warning.

When they reached Newhaven her escort found a carriage for her, in which she was driven to the door of her old friend, but on attempting to alight from it she fainted, and would have fallen if the driver had not caught her in his arms.

Rosa was taken into the house in this lifeless condition, and Mrs. Lyme had her at once conveyed to her old quarters and placed in bed. She remained beside her till she recovered from the swoon, in the hope that Rosa would be able to afford some explanation of her sudden appearance in this forlorn condition.

But when consciousness returned she was evidently unable to enlighten her, and Mrs. Lyme saw that she was in the first paroxysm of a violent fever. A physician was hastily summoned to her side, and days of anxiety and nights of watching passed away before Rosa awoke to the knowledge of what was passing around her; and many more elapsed before she had strength to refer to the events of the last few months.

When she at length did so she informed her old friend only of such portions of them as did not too severely wound her own pride, and she accounted for her rupture with the Bates family by saying that they were offended at her refusal to marry Adolphus.

This surprised Mrs. Lyme, for she thought Rosa intensely worldly, and she asked:

"Was the young gentleman so very repulsive to you, my dear, that you could not weigh the advantages of the match against such girlish objections as you might have had to him? Mr. Bates is very rich, I believe, and you wrote telling me that there are but two children."

"Yes, they are reported rich, but I have reason to know that their commercial prosperity is not based on the most stable foundation. In fact, I believe that Adolphus thought me likely to inherit a portion of Mrs. Hawks's fortune, or he would never have committed himself so far as to ask me to marry him."

"Why should he have fancied that, Rosa? You were known to her so short a time that you could scarcely have cherished such a hope yourself."

"It would scarcely have been strange if I had done so, Mrs. Lyme, for the old lady took a violent fancy to me, and if others had not interfered between us in a most unwarrantable manner I am almost sure that she would have provided handsomely for me. It is all over now, and I have nothing to look forward to but to begin again the weary struggle to earn my own living by teaching unskilful fingers to make music odious and distasteful to me, much as I once loved it. It is a hard fate for one constituted as I am, but I assure you that I consider it preferable to marrying Adolphus Bates for a home."

"That is the right feeling, my dear child, and I am glad therefore that you did not accept him. I think that I can find employment for you which will afford you more pleasure than merely teaching music. I was about to write to you when you came here so unexpectedly, to lay before you the offer of a situation as governess which I have received for you. The salary will be high and your duties light, as there will be but one pupil and she is nearly grown up."

"I shall not accept it," said Rosa, abruptly. "I have made up my mind to remain with you another year at least—that is if you can give me my old position in your school."

"We will talk on that subject hereafter, Rosa, when you are stronger and better able to take a correct view of what is best for yourself. You are flushing and trembling now, so I will leave this discussion for another day. I will give you your medicine and leave you to repose, for I see that you need it. Hereafter, when you are quite well and strong again, we will renew the subject, and I think you will change your decision after we have spoken farther on this subject. Good-night, my dear; get a good night's rest and try to regain your bloom and beauty. I assure you that a fine field in which to display them is opening before you."

Rosa would have detained her and heard all that she had to tell, but Mrs. Lyme was despotically, and she was left alone to muse over her late defeat and wonder what her future lot was to be; but the nar-

cotic drops she had taken soon asserted their power over her weakened frame, and she fell into a refreshing, life-renewing slumber in which we will leave her and return to the Glades to see what has been developed there during the long weeks of Rosa's illness and convalescence.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

NEWPORT was deserted, for autumn had put on its drapery of crimson and gold and the latest seekers after health or pleasure had with the first frost winged their way to their distant homes, leaving the hotels nearly tenantless.

But there was one who yet lingered there, in the daily diminishing hope that the fortune of his betrothed might be rescued from the jeopardy in which it stood and their future union assured beyond a doubt.

Fenton had laboured assiduously to bring about this result, but alas! without effect. Blagdon was not to be found, and even his mother could throw no light as to whether he had gone.

Wilkins, under the dread inspired by Rosa's threats, feared to betray the villany of which he had been guilty, though every effort was made by Mr. Manly and the young lover to beguile from him a confession which would enable them to fasten on him the charge of having possessed himself of the will of Mr. Horton.

Mr. Lopez offered a reward of ten thousand pounds for its recovery, but that was not enough to tempt Wilkins to brave the exposure which he felt assured would ensue.

He could not live in the style he aspired to on the interest of such a sum as that, and he knew that steady attention to his professional duties would insure him much more in the course of a few years; so Mr. Wilkins balanced disgrace and respectability against each other, and, unlikewise for the interests of Inez, the latter outweighed the price offered by her father for the former.

But Inez thought little of that.

She lived in an enchanted Paradise during those autumnal weeks in which Rosa lay struggling back into life—to that life which, for herself and those her future actions were so deeply to affect, had far better have ended then.

But "coldly, darkly strong is fate," and they all walked blindly forward in the path marked out for them to take.

Fenton devoted to Inez all the hours he could spare from the business details he undertook for Mr. Lopez; and much as he had loved her before, he felt now that day by day she became more dear and more necessary to the happiness of his future life.

Yet amid the deepest intoxication of his passion Fenton admitted to himself that if the fortune of Mrs. Hawks eluded all his efforts to secure it for his betrothed, he dared not offend his imperious mother by making Inez his wife. He could not look forward to that result.

He would hope against hope as long as that was possible, and then, if the worst came, he could but relinquish her whose love he knew would make his life purer and nobler, if he were only unselfish enough to brave narrow means for her sake.

But this Fenton was not.

He shuddered at the mere thought of the obscurity into which he must sink as the husband of one so slenderly provided for as Inez—burdened too, as they must be, by her helpless and exacting father.

But these doubts and struggles were never permitted to ruffle the serenity of the hours the lovers passed together.

In the presence of Inez Fenton forgot everything but that she was the most adorable of women, and he the happy possessor of her tender and faithful heart.

If Crow had been on the spot his compunctions of conscience might have led to a confession of his share in the robbery, and his evidence would have forced Wilkins to produce the missing will; but a few days before the decease of Mrs. Hawks his uncle had discovered the evil paths into which he was straying, and took immediate measures to remove him from the disreputable associates with whom he had become entangled.

He dispatched him to India to attend to some important business which had been entrusted to Mr. Crampton.

Thus, to the infinite relief of Wilkins, his ally in crime was sent out of the way precisely when his presence would have been most inconvenient to him.

Time rolled onwards, bringing the golden days of October to a close, and the hazy, dream-like atmosphere of summer was swept away by a cold storm from the north-east, which scattered and dispersed the gorgeous autumn foliage, leaving the lofty trees that encompassed the Glades bare and sere. Shipwrecks were frequent on the sea-coast, and desola-

tion hung over the wintry-looking landscape, but to the heart of the lover of Inez Lopez a shipwreck of another kind came.

Mr. Manly could no longer defer acting on the will of Mrs. Hawks, for it had become known that her estate was left to charities, and inconvenient inquiries began to be made as to the delay which had already taken place in presenting it for probate. With much reluctance he took such steps as were necessary, and trustees were appointed by the county in which Mrs. Hawks was born to take possession of the estate, and pay over such legacies as she had bequeathed to the niece and Mrs. Perkins.

To the last Mr. Lopez declared that he would contest the will, but he finally relinquished this intention when assured by his lawyers that he would gain nothing by it.

With inexpressible rage and mortification he saw the wealth to which he felt assured his daughter was the legal heir taken away from her, and he tried to console himself for his bitter disappointment by using still larger quantities of the fatal drug that was slowly undermining the very springs of life.

He became more irritable every day, in spite of the efforts of both Inez and her lover to brighten his broken and weary life; and but for the sustaining presence of Fenton, and the anticipation of the bright future to be shared with him, Inez would have sunk beneath the trials her father daily inflicted upon her.

But the strong feeling of happiness in her young heart defied reverses of fortune or fractiousness of temper as long as she believed herself the chosen one of the man to whom she was so ardently attached.

Inez did not remark that Fenton no longer spoke of their speedy union as a certainty. He constantly received letters from his mother, which he never showed to her, and she could not fail to observe that each one seemed to depress him more deeply. Those letters contained stringent commands from Mrs. Markland to return without delay, for Guy Denham and his sister had come home; and a flirtation, as his aunt called it, had sprung up between Denham and Opal Hastings, which threatened to interfere with her son's claims in that quarter.

So long as Fenton cherished the hope that Inez would eventually succeed to her grandfather's fortune he was indifferent to this; but when it seemed certain that the estate was irrevocably gone he began to think it most unwise in himself to sacrifice his future prospects, and lose all chance of winning Miss Hastings, with the great wealth she would inherit.

Fenton pitied himself—he cursed his fate; but he finally decided that he must go or forfeit his mother's favour, thus entailing ruin on himself.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ON a cold, blustering evening in November Fenton set out for the Glades to warn Inez of the necessity which compelled him, for a season, to leave her. He had no intention of telling her the whole truth, that would be too severe a blow to deal her trusting heart at once. He meant to use his best efforts to soften his mother, and if possible gain her consent to his marriage with Inez, though he had little hope of success.

If Mrs. Markland could only be induced to continue his present liberal allowance after their union, he would return and redeem his troth before the winter ended. If she refused to do this Inez must gradually learn the blight that had fallen on her happiness, for Fenton could not, he dared not, lay bare before her the wretched doubts and uncertainties that filled his own mind.

With the feeling of a criminal about to receive sentence, Fenton dismounted at the door of the old house and demanded admittance. Mrs. Perkins opened it, carrying Bijou in her arms, followed by Don. By her efforts a permanent truce had been effected between the two pets, and they now lived together in perfect amity. The woman herself looked far happier than during her days of attendance on Mrs. Hawks, and she was evidently glad to welcome Fenton, for she blithely said:

"Miss Inez is playing backgammon with her pa, but now you have come, Mr. Fenton, she'll have a holiday, and Mr. Lopez will put up with me for an antagonist. He can beat me easy enough, and that is all he cares for."

In a low tone Fenton replied:

"Be sure to interest him sufficiently to allow me a long conversation with Inez, Mrs. Perkins, for I have something important to say to her to-night."

"So you always have, sir; but I hope there's nothing wrong? You don't look like yourself this evening."

"Don't I? Well, that is easily accounted for, for I am chilled through and a little tired, for I have had a great deal to attend to to-day. Nothing has gone

right of late, and I am a little out of sorts—that is all."

Mrs. Perkins advanced a step nearer and in a mysterious tone said:

"Don't be fretting, Mr. Fenton, about the trustees taking possession of the money Miss Inez ought to have, for somehow I feel sure that she'll get it yet. There's a Providence, you know, sir, that rules all things for good to them that trust in it, and I know that things will come right yet for my dear young lady. I dream every night that I see her decked with pearls and diamonds and dressed magnificently, and I never had such dreams about anyone that they did not result in some great good fortune."

With a constrained laugh Fenton said:

"I only wish I had your faith, Mrs. Perkins, for it would be worth a great deal to me just now. I shall find Mr. Lopez and his daughter in the usual room, I suppose?"

"No, sir; I came to take you to the new parlour Miss Inez has had fitted up. She kept it secret, as a surprise for you when it was all ready, and a pretty taste the dear child has. Oh, Mr. Fenton, you will have the sweetest wife in the world when you and she are married, and I do hope that you'll be as happy together as the angels in heaven. I am sure you both deserve it."

"She does, I know, but as to myself I am afraid there is not much of the angelic about me. But lead the way, if you please, for I am impatient to see Inez."

Thus admonished Mrs. Perkins crossed the hall and unclosed a door opposite to the one opening into the apartment of Mr. Lopez. A scene was revealed that struck the visitor as the perfection of comfort and good taste.

The room was of medium size, with a large bay window on one side draped with crimson hangings. The floor was covered with a Brussels carpet, the prevailing hue of which was of the same rich, warm colour, and on the hearth a bright wood fire was burning.

The furniture was all new and selected with perfect taste, and two large chairs were drawn up in front of the hearth with a table between them on which the backgammon-board rested.

Inez had not been permitted by her irate father to wear mourning for her aunt, after he felt assured that she had been disinherited; she was dressed in a crimson merino, embroidered with black, with a knot of ribbon of the same hue drawn through the massive folds of her raven hair. She looked magnificently handsome, though rather weary, and her father was vociferously shaking the dice in his box before making his throw.

"Sixes twice in succession! I declare, Inez, such luck as that is enough to defeat the best playing. But if I get a doublet in my turn I will beat you yet, though the odds are so much against me."

"I hope you will get them, papa, for I do not care to win. Oh! here is Godfrey at last!"

And she sprang up with a smile of such beaming welcome that, sad as Fenton's heart was, he was thrilled with delight.

"So—you have come at the eleventh hour," said Mr. Lopez, with a flash from his black eyes which showed that he was not in one of his best moods. "A short time back we did not have to wait till evening to welcome you to the Glades, Godfrey; and after Inez had taken the pains to arrange this room as a pleasant surprise for you, I began to think that you did not intend to come and see it till after its first freshness was gone."

"That was speculating on impossibilities, my dear sir, for you knew that I should not fail to come hither at the first practicable moment. I have been constantly engaged for the last few days, and I have only snatched a few hours from business to come here now. This room is indeed a charming surprise, for it is fitted up with extreme taste. I hope that you will enjoy it as much as your daughter intended you should when she furnished it."

"Oh! it wasn't done for me. I like my own better than any other place; but in the new state of things that will be inaugurated with my daughter's marriage with you I agreed that we must have some of the disused rooms painted and furnished. Inez has done her part very cleverly, and the expense has not been greater than we could afford with our increased income. A thousand a year is wealth to us, you know, after living so long on little more than half that sum."

Fenton winced a little at this reference to a union which he had reluctantly made up his mind would never take place.

But he smiled, and replied:

"It was very considerate of you I am sure, and I am most flattered and grateful."

"Of course, of course. But pray enlighten me as to the nature of the important business you spoke of. Since my affairs were so well arranged by you, I had

no idea that you had any other occupation than to amuse yourself."

With a half-suppressed sigh Fenton sank into the chair Mrs. Perkins placed for him, and slowly said:

"Until a few hours ago that was the case; but an imperative summons from my mother, who is ill, has reached me, and I must depart to-morrow. I have been busy making arrangements for my departure, or I should have been here many hours ago."

At this announcement Inez sank back, pale and trembling, and her father angrily said:

"I do not understand you, Mr. Fenton. I have been under the impression that, before you left here for your home, you would be united to my daughter. I hope that the loss of her fortune has nothing to do with this change in your intentions?"

"Oh, papa," remonstrated Inez, in a faint tone, "pray do not speak thus. You wrong Godfrey cruelly by such an insinuation."

Fenton turned towards her, and fervently said:

"Yes, he does wrong me, Inez; for if ever a man adoringly loved a woman, I love you. The dearest hope of my life is to call you mine, but it is right for me to do all that lies in my power to gain my mother's consent to our union before it takes place. Her letters leave me no room to hope that anything can be accomplished unless we meet face to face, and if I do not set my will against hers such a meeting must eventually give me the victory. Besides, she is really ill; she has summoned me to her bed-side; and if I fail to go at once, she may die, refusing me her forgiveness for my disobedience."

Inez replied before her father could make his voice heard:

"You are quite right, Godfrey. Your mother has the first claim on you, and you must hasten to her side. You will come back, I feel sure, bearing with you her consent to the completion of our happiness."

"Thank you, dear love; I knew that you would be just to me," breathed Fenton, in his mildest tone.

(To be continued.)

SALTERIES.—Lympington, in Hants, has ceased to be a salt-producing place. Salteries have been in existence there for nearly 900 years. At the commencement of the present century upwards of 5,000 tons were produced there in one year.

THE POLICE OF PARIS.—The cost of the police of Paris is now thirteen millions of francs a year, or more than one-twelfth of the revenue of the capital. The police consists of 5,700 men, or three per thousand of the whole population of Paris worth their weight in sous.

THE THAMES SOUTHERN EMBANKMENT.—The cost of the ground of the Thames Southern Embankment is now ascertained to be 324,492*l*. Of this 108,000*l* will be recouped by the sum paid for the site of St. Thomas's Hospital. This is exclusive of the amount of contract for the construction of the embankment itself.

ADVICES FROM CHINA of the 13th of June announce the opening of the tea season at Foo-choo. Although fears were entertained of a short crop owing to heavy rains, prices had opened lower than at the corresponding period of last year. Vessels with more than three million pounds' weight of tea had already sailed for England.

NOTHING NEW.—FASHIONABLE DRESSES FOR 1783.—By a Lady of Fashion. (Grosvenor Square.) Full dress.—The hair large, and the chignon low behind; the hoop extremely large, the trimmings chiefly foil and ermine, diamonds, and a panache of white feathers. The bosom of the gown is cut very low behind and before. Brilliant roses on the shoes. Diamond buckles to the glove strings.—*Lady's Magazine* for 1783.

HYDROPHOBIA IN PARIS.—At the St. Louis Hospital a boy nine years old died lately of this fearful disease. It is remarkable that the patient had not been bitten: a dog, subsequently found in a rabid state and destroyed, had scratched him on the cheek, and eighteen days afterwards the child began to sicken. He never experienced horror of water, was not excited by shining articles, did not continually eject sputa, but was principally troubled with paralysis of the pharynx, and died asphyxiated.

SHEEP IN AUSTRALIA.—The increase of live stock in Australia has so outgrown the requirements of the population that an influential meeting of squatters of the Riverine districts was held at Deniliquin, in May, at which it was resolved to establish a Hay on the Murrumbidgee, a joint-stock establishment capable of boiling down 10,000 sheep a week. Mr. Gideon Lang was appointed chairman of the company. The statistics show that in 1842 there were in Australia 6,194,004 sheep and 1,066,233 cattle, which, on the 31st December, 1865, had increased to 33,381,783

sheep and 8,957,270 cattle in Australia, and 5,075,000 sheep and 265,000 cattle in New Zealand, 3,738,175 sheep and 620,438 cattle having been boiled down during that period. This great increase, coupled with the fact that the country in the far interior is now considered to be stocked to the limits of what could be profitably occupied, appears to have left no alternative but to provide for the annual augmentation by converting it into a form of merchandise capable of being conveniently shipped to Europe. If salted meat, or Liebig's extract of it, is found to sell profitably in the European markets, large additions will, it is said, be made in these forms to the annual exports from Australia. There will be some difficulty, however, in providing casks, the timber of the colonies being in very few instances suitable.

THE EARLY YEARS OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE CONSORT.

A LABOUR of love, and a work which is replete with interest to every subject of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, has just been published under the above title. It is a copious and unreserved relation of the early years of the late lamented Albert the Good, to whose wise advice our Queen owed so much during his life, and who by his many good qualities and talents endeared his memory to every true Englishman.

This work was originally compiled by General Grey and revised by Her Majesty, being at that time intended solely for private circulation chiefly among the members of the royal family. But it soon became apparent to Her Majesty that, however great the care taken to preserve its privacy, a copy might surreptitiously be obtained and published in an altered form. Upon the advice of persons in whom she placed the greatest confidence, the Queen determined upon giving every publicity to it herself. There was also another reason which prompted this resolution, and this was perhaps the strongest—a thorough and heartfelt belief that the free and unreserved expression which the volume contains of her own feelings and those of the Prince was such that if made public it would command the sympathy of all; and, believing that not one word was ever uttered by the Prince himself that would not tend to a better appreciation of his character, the Queen determined to take her subjects one and all into her confidence, opening her heart thoroughly to them, abandoning all the mystery that usually surrounds a throne, with all the earnestness and candour which nothing but the most earnest love for her late consort, and a deep anxiety that he should be represented to the world in all the completeness of his character, could have induced.

The work will be read by all with pleasure and reverence for that good and loved Prince, who was taken from us in the very zenith of his manhood, and whose death has cast so deep a gloom over the royal household and the country. The volume will form a monument to our Queen, and will hand her down to posterity as, not only a great sovereign, but a good woman and a devoted wife; while future generations will be able to form an idea of the character of Prince Albert, which, without this work, it would have been impossible for them to do. In its production, therefore, Her Majesty has not only rendered a service to her subjects, but to the world.

The volume is a massive one, and contains, in the minutest detail, a complete history of Prince Albert's early life. Some "Introductory Remarks," in which there are many undeniable touches from the Queen's own hand, contain a sketch of the Prince's own character, and serve to point out the features of most interest in the present volume. The intention of furnishing a fitting memoir of the Prince is modestly disclaimed. The work "will contain a compilation of letters and memoranda, the greater part those of the Prince himself and of the Queen, from which materials may at the proper time be extracted for such a memoir as may be given to the world." But as the remarks proceed we are able to trace in these memoranda the career of the Prince from his earliest childhood. We have the evidence of his tutor to the excellences which he early displayed, and interesting descriptions by his most intimate friends of his character. This volume is but the first of a series in which the whole life of the Prince will be described; but it carries us as far as the first year of the Queen's marriage and the birth of the Princess Royal. It gives us, in fact, a complete description of the Prince up to the moment when he is identified with ourselves.

The volume opens with an interesting account of the ancestors and the nearest connexions of the Prince. Prince Albert's father was Duke Ernest I. of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld; but not many years after Prince Albert's birth the male line of the allied house

of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg became extinct, and, by a family arrangement, Saalfeld passed to the Dukes of Meiningen, while Gotha was attached to the Coburg family. Duke Ernest in 1817 married the daughter of the last Duke of Gotha, and by her he had two sons—Ernest, the present reigning Duke, born in 1818, and Albert, the subject of this memoir, on the 26th of August, 1819. A memorandum, written by the Queen in 1864, gives an account of their mother and of her melancholy fate. She is described as "very handsome, although very small, fair, and with blue eyes; and Prince Albert is said to have been extremely like her." She was, moreover, full of cleverness and talent. But the marriage was not a happy one. The Duke and Duchess were separated in 1824, and divorced in 1826, and the Duchess died in 1831, in her 32nd year. She is always spoken of with affection and respect, and we are told that "the Prince never forgot her, and spoke with much tenderness and sorrow of his poor mother, and was deeply affected by reading, after his marriage, the accounts of her sad and painful illness." After her death in 1831 Duke Ernest soon married again; but of course, under these circumstances, neither the mother nor the step-mother of the two young Princes had much control over their education. They experienced, however, no lack of motherly care, for two grandmothers watched over them from their earliest years with the most constant anxiety. Their grandmother on the father's side, the Dowager Duchess of Coburg-Saalfeld, lived at only a quarter of a mile's distance on one side of Coburg, at a village called Ketschendorf, while Rosenau, the summer residence of the Duke, was but four miles on the other side. On the birth of Prince Albert she was summoned at once to the bedside of her daughter-in-law, and we find her from there writing to announce the happy event to her own daughter, the Duchess of Kent, in England.

The youthful Prince Albert was baptized in September, 1819, by the names of Francis Charles Augustus Albert Emmanuel, but Albert was the name by which he was always known. He must certainly have been a most charming child. The following is his mother's description of him when he was eight months old, in which she contrasts the two brothers:

"Ernest is very tall for his age, lively and intelligent—his large black eyes expressive of life and vivacity. Albert is handsome—extraordinarily so; has large blue eyes, a very small mouth, a pretty nose, and dimpled cheeks; he is always lively and good-tempered; he has three teeth, and although only eight months old, has already commenced to walk."

A portrait of the Prince at the age of four prefixed to the volume amply supports the praises that are lavished on his beauty in childhood. It is as beautiful a child's face as could be conceived.

The education of the two young Princes, notwithstanding one or two serious disadvantages, was from the first excellently conducted. Their life during the next eight years is described in a good deal of detail, and the picture is very simple and charming. At the age of four the boys were taken from their nurse and intrusted to the care of a tutor, M. Florschütz, under whose charge they remained for fifteen years, until they had completed their education at the University of Bonn. Their removal from female care at so early an age caused a very natural anxiety in their grandmother at Gotha, for the Prince was subject to dangerous attacks of croup. But we are told that "the Prince from a child showed a great dislike to being in the charge of women, and rejoiced instead of sorrowing over the contemplated change." The strength of the Prince, indeed, was in his mind rather than in his body. He was healthy, but never robust. King Leopold describes him as "looking delicate in his youngest days," but adds that "he was always an intelligent child, and held a certain sway over his brother, who rather kindly submitted to it." When only six years old he kept a diary, which contains the simplest and most childlike prattle.

In 1825 his father obtained the Dukedom of Gotha in addition to that of Coburg, and henceforth the time of the two children was divided between the two duchies. The winter months were spent in the capitals of Coburg and Gotha, and the summer months in the neighbouring palaces of Rosenau and Reinhardsbrunn.

At the Queen's request one of his cousins, Count Arthur Mensdorff, who was occasionally his playmate, has drawn up an account of his reminiscences of him, and this memorandum furnishes the most lively picture of his character during this period.

"Albert, as a child, was of a mild, benevolent disposition. It was only what he thought unjust or dishonest that could make him angry. Thus I recollect one day when we children, Albert, Ernest, Ferdinand, Augustus, Alexander, myself, and a few

other boys (if I am not mistaken Paul Wangenheim was one), were playing at the Rosenau, and some of us were to storm the old ruined tower on the side of the castle, which the others were to defend, one of us suggested that there was a place at the back by which we could get in without being seen, and thus capture it without difficulty. Albert declared that 'this would be most unbecoming in a Saxon knight, who should always attack the enemy in front,' and so we fought for the tower so honestly and vigorously that Albert, by mistake, for I was on his side, gave me a blow upon the nose, of which I still bear the mark. I need not say how sorry he was for the wound he had given me.

"Albert never was noisy or wild. He was always very fond of natural history and more serious studies, and many a happy hour we spent in the Ehrenburg, the Palace at Coburg, in a small room under the roof, arranging and dusting the collections our cousins had themselves made and kept there. He urged me to begin making a similar collection myself, so that we might join and form together a good cabinet.

"From his earliest infancy he was distinguished for perfect moral purity, both in word and deed; and to this he owed the sweetness of disposition so much admired by everyone.

"While still very young his heart was feelingly alive to the sufferings of the poor. I saw him one day give a beggar something by stealth, when he told me not to speak of it; 'for when you give to the poor,' he said, 'you must see that nobody knows of it.'

"He was always fond of shooting and fishing, as far as his natural kind feeling would permit, for a wounded animal always excited his warmest compassion.

"In later years we saw much less of each other. In 1839, when I was serving in the Austrian Lancers, we met at Toplitz, and thence drove together to Carlsbad, to see uncle Ernest. Ede, a favourite black greyhound that the Prince brought with him to England, was in the carriage. During our journey Albert confided to me, under the seal of the strictest confidence, that he was going to England to make your acquaintance, and that if you liked each other you were to be engaged. He spoke very seriously about the difficulties of the position he would have to occupy in England, but hoped that dear uncle Leopold would assist him with his advice. We were at that moment approaching the station where we were to change horses. He asked me the name of the place, which I told him was Buchau, a little village known all round as a sort of *Kräutwinkel*, famous for all sorts of ludicrous stories about the inhabitants. We drove into the place, the postilion blowing his horn and cracking his whip. Albert, seeing a large crowd assembled round the post-house, said to me, 'Quick, stoop down in the carriage, and we will make Ede look out of the window, and all the people will wonder at the funny Prince.' We did so, and the people had to satisfy their curiosity with Ede. The horses were soon changed, and we drove off, laughing heartily at our little joke."

His instructor, M. Florschütz, who discharged his duties to the Prince admirably, has also drawn up an interesting memorandum, from which we learn that the Prince's regular lessons commenced at six years old. At first he was only taught one hour a day; from his seventh to his ninth year he was taught three hours; from his ninth to his eleventh year four hours. Bodily exercises and amusements occupied the remainder of the day. Even after he went to Bonn his regular lessons did not exceed five hours. So long as he was at home even this time was greatly interrupted; for his father seems to have been of very restless habits, and it was his custom to breakfast during the summer months in the open air, generally at a different place every day. In fact, the Prince had generally to make an excursion to his breakfast, and as the morning was his time for study his work was frequently disturbed. The Queen says that he often complained of this himself in after life. It must not be supposed, however, that his studies were confined to his regular lessons. He was indefatigable in his own improvement. At the age of fourteen he drew up for himself a programme of his studies for every hour and day. This included, says his tutor, all his self-imposed tasks, and well it may. It will be seen that, if it were carried out, it involves six or sometimes seven hours' work a day before two o'clock, and two hours' work in the evening. It affords also an interesting description of the general character of his instruction. It will be seen that the ancient languages were far from occupying the exclusive place they hold in our English education, but that modern languages and what we should consider accomplishments receive quite as much attention.

In 1835 he and his brother were confirmed together on Palm Sunday. He was deeply impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and throughout

his life his sense of religion always remained very deep and active. After this he made his first entrance into the world. He made a rapid tour through Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Vienna, Pesth, and Ofen, being presented at court and joining in all the festivities of the various capitals. He and his brother made a very favourable impression. In 1836 we have some insight into the nature of his studies, in a letter he wrote to the chief of the gymnastum at Coburg, and the subject of his thoughts seems rather a formidable one for a youth of fourteen.

But this year is marked by a far more important event—his first visit to England and his introduction to the Princess Victoria. The Duke and his two sons arrived at the end of May, and were lodged in Kensington Palace, the residence of the Duchess of Kent. The Princess and he were each in their seventeenth year, the Princess being the eldest by a few months. There is not much said of his visit, but a memorandum by the Queen gives us her impression of him at that time:

"The Prince was at that time much shorter than his brother, already very handsome, but very stout, which he entirely grew out of afterwards. He was most amiable, natural, unaffected, and merry; full of interest in everything; playing on the piano with the Princess, his cousin, drawing—in short, constantly occupied. He always paid the greatest attention to all he saw, and the Queen remembers well how intently he listened to the sermon preached in St. Paul's when he and his father and brother accompanied the Duchess of Kent and the Princess there, on the occasion of the service attended by the children of the different charity schools. It is indeed rare to see a Prince, not yet seventeen years of age, bestowing such earnest attention on a sermon."

From London the Princes returned, through Paris to Brussels, where they stayed until April of 1837, studying modern languages and history, and accompanying their uncle to reviews and other excursions. While here rumours were already spread of an intended marriage between the Prince and the future Queen of England, but nothing, the Queen tells us, had been decided at that time. In April he and his brother went to the University of Bonn, where they attended the lectures of Schlegel, Fichte, and Perthes, and while here we have an account of his character from Prince Lowenstein, his chief companion, which closely resembles the description given of him when younger by Count Mensdorff. He distinguished himself alike in mental and physical acquirements, and was celebrated also for his humour and love of fun. In June, however, of this year King William IV. died, and the Prince writes to his cousin the following letter:

"MY DEAREST COUSIN,—I must write you a few lines to present you my sincerest felicitations on the great change which has taken place in your life. Now you are Queen of the mightiest land of Europe, in your hand lies the happiness of millions. May heaven assist you and strengthen you with its strength in that high and difficult task! I hope that your reign may be long, happy, and glorious, and that your efforts may be rewarded by the thankfulness and love of your subjects. May I pray you to think sometimes of your cousins in Bonn, and to continue to them that kindness you favoured them with till now? Be assured that our minds are always with you. I will not be indiscreet and abuse your time. Believe me always, your Majesty's most obedient and faithful servant, ALBERT."

Soon after this the Princes went for a long tour through Switzerland and the North of Italy, but returned to their studies at Bonn in October. On his return he sent the Queen a book containing views of almost all the places he visited in Switzerland and Italy. From the Rigi he sent her a dried "rose des Alpes," and from Voltaire's house at Ferney a scrap of that philosopher's handwriting.

In the February of 1838, however, the prospects of the Prince were formally opened to him. He paid a visit to Brussels, where his uncle Leopold talked fully to him on this subject. The Queen, it seems, had not corresponded regularly with him since her accession, but the King told him that she had not altered her mind, but did not wish to marry for some time yet. The Prince and his father seemed very much to object to any unnecessary delay, but for the present the Prince returned to Bonn to complete his studies until the autumn of 1838, and still later he started for a tour in Italy, accompanied by Baron Stockmar and Lieutenant (afterwards Major-General) Seymour. He spent a considerable time at Florence, Rome, and Naples, and only returned to Coburg in June. Here he was eager to devote himself to the study of English, anticipating no doubt the important event that was awaiting him.

In October he visited England again, and this time to be betrothed to Queen Victoria. The manner in which he had regarded the proposal himself is de-

scribed in the following letter from King Leopold to Baron Stockmar, written after his interview with the Prince in 1838:

"I have had," he says, "a long conversation with Albert, and have put the whole case honestly and kindly before him. He looks at the question from its most elevated and honourable point of view. He considers that troubles are inseparable from all human positions, and that, therefore, if one must be subject to plagues and annoyances, it is better to be so for some great or worthy object than for trifles and miseries. I have told him that his great youth would make it necessary to postpone the marriage for a few years. . . . I found him very sensible on all these points. But one thing he observed with truth. 'I am ready,' he said, 'to submit to this delay, if I have only some certain assurance to go upon. But if, after waiting perhaps for three years, I should find that the Queen no longer desired the marriage, it would place me in a very ridiculous position, and would, to a certain extent, ruin all the prospects of my future life.'"

It seems to have been feared at this time that there might be some hesitation on the Queen's part, but the uncertainty, if any prevailed, was soon decided. On the 15th of October, by order of the Queen, the Prince was summoned to her room, and what then passed we must leave to be described in the following extract:

"After a few minutes' conversation on other subjects the Queen told him why she had sent for him; and we can well understand any little hesitation and delicacy she may have felt in doing so; for the Queen's position, making it imperative that any proposal of marriage should come first from her, must necessarily appear a painful one to those who, deriving their ideas on this subject from the practice of private life, are wont to look upon it as the privilege and happiness of a woman to have her hand sought in marriage, instead of having to offer it herself.

"How the Prince received the offer will appear best from the following few lines which he wrote the next day to the old friend of his family, Baron Stockmar, who was naturally one of the first to be informed of his engagement:—'I write to you,' he says, 'on one of the happiest days of my life, to give you the most welcome news possible; and, having then described what took place, he proceeds, 'Victoria is so good and kind to me that I am often at a loss to believe that such affection should be shown to me. I know the great interest you take in my happiness, and therefore pour out my heart to you; and he ends by saying, 'More or more seriously I cannot write to you; for that, at this moment, I am too bewildered.'"

"The Queen herself says that the Prince received her offer without any hesitation, and with the warmest demonstration of kindness and affection; and, after a natural expression of her feeling of happiness, Her Majesty adds, in the fervour and sincerity of her heart, with the straightforward simplicity that marks all the entries in her journal, 'How I will strive to make him feel as little as possible the great sacrifice he has made. I told him it was a great sacrifice on his part, but he would not allow it. I then told him to fetch Ernest, which he did, who congratulated us both, and seemed very happy. He told me how perfect his brother was.'"

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE FATAL DISCOVERY.

How did I get my first start in life? Well, in a very singular manner—a very singular manner indeed. I will tell you.

Let me see. I am now rather advanced in years, seventy-seven last January—what some people call getting old, though, somehow, my heart feels as young as ever. Seventy-seven years, with nineteen off, leaves fifty-eight. Fifty-eight years ago in June; that would carry it back to the year 1809. Yes, that is right—that is the year I went out to Port-au-Prince, Hayti, as captain's clerk.

The captain and I not agreeing very well, I left him there, and while looking for another berth I fell in with a countryman of mine who wanted to take a trip into the interior, merely to gratify his curiosity.

"I have heard," he said, "that the scenery among the hills is the most beautiful in the world, and I am anxious to see it, but would rather not venture alone, and hitherto have found no one to be my companion. Now if you can spare a few days and will go with me I will not only bear all expenses, but pay you a reasonable price for your time."

"I am your man," was my reply.

We immediately set to work and procured a good outfit—rifles, pistols, knives, tinder-box, wallets, knapsacks, canteens, and dry provisions, which we

expected to eke out with fresh game, and the second day saw us on our travels into an uninhabited region.

I pass over the first few days of romantic exploration, during which we penetrated deep forests and dense jungles, where vegetation ran riot, forded numerous streams, climbed steep hills, scaled precipices, descended into dark valleys, and saw nature in all her wildness, grandeur and beauty, with enough of peril from wild beasts and poisonous reptiles to keep us keenly on the alert.

On the fifth or sixth day we discovered the finest scene of all—a succession of precipices, like so many terraces, one above the other, down which poured and roared a series of cascades, with mountains towering far heavenward on three sides of the whole, and a tranquil river and flowery valley on the fourth—altogether a combination of grandeur, beauty and sublimity that was really enchanting. We spent the remainder of the day here, built our camp-fire on one of the highest ledges, and slept listening to the music of the night-birds and falling waters.

On the following day we discovered the entrance to a beautiful grotto, which we immediately determined to explore.

Collecting some resinous sticks, and binding them together to serve for torches, we lighted our bunch, and entered where perhaps the foot of man had never before penetrated.

The entrance was narrow, a little higher than our heads, and my companion went cautiously forward with the light, and I as cautiously followed.

After getting in some fifty feet, in a zigzag course, we suddenly came to a large apartment, hung with the most beautiful stalactites, which flashed and sparkled in the light with an effect which defies description, and we could easily fancy we were in a palace of diamonds.

"This is worth the labour of a lifetime to behold!" exclaimed my companion, enthusiastically.

"Gorgeous beyond my wildest dreams!" I replied.

This hall was very large, not less than three hundred feet in length, by two hundred in breadth, and in some places perhaps fifty feet to the roof, with an even, level floor.

While feasting our eyes on the surrounding beauties we gradually moved on, and came to where three dark passages led deeper into the bowels of the earth, the central one going straight forward, and the others turning off respectively to the right and left. We took the middle one, which was about ten feet wide, and as many high, and arched at the beginning with nearly as much regularity as if cut out by the hand of art.

After advancing a few paces we found it gradually narrowed, and began to descend somewhat abruptly, the air becoming more damp and heavy. Presently it expanded into a long, low hall of solid rock, which, unlike the first apartment, was dark and gloomy, affording the wildest contrast.

On exploring this apartment we found no less than six more passages, leading off in as many different directions.

We selected the largest and still went forward, though I confess I began to feel a little uneasy, for fear we might venture too far, lose our way, and not be able to get back.

"Don't let us risk too much the first time," I said to my companion, by way of courtesy; "for I have no desire to be buried alive."

"There is not the least danger," he replied. "I know every turn, and could find my way out in the dark."

Soon after this we came to a place where the passage was so contracted that, at first, we were compelled to stoop, and then to crawl forward on our hands and knees.

Again I remonstrated, but my companion did not heed me.

We kept on in this manner for some distance, and then the passage enlarged, and led up a steep ascent. After toiling up about fifty feet we came to another brilliant chamber of stalactites, and found a dozen more inviting passages leading we knew not where.

Our first torch was by this time pretty well burned out, and, as we lighted one of the two others which I carried, I remarked:

"It would be tempting fate to go any farther now, I propose turning back."

"Hark!" he said. "I do believe I hear running water, and I must see what it is. This way; follow me. There is no danger. I will guide you back in safety."

He again went forward as he spoke, and as he still carried the light I was obliged to accompany him, or remain in darkness.

We thus went on and on, through a rather open passage, and, as we advanced, the sound of falling

water became more and more audible, till, at length, we came in sight of a bright running stream, that flowed along over a clear bed, and fell down, with a sudden plunge and gloomy roar, into some dark abyss that was frightful to behold.

As we stopped and contemplated this wonder of nature, with the lurid torch lighting up the awful scene, I suddenly perceived what appeared to be several bright sparks of fire in the bed of the stream.

As the depth of the water was only a few inches, I fixed my eye on one, descended into the current, stooped down, picked it up, and held it to the light.

"What have you found, Benson?" asked my companion.

"What is it?" said I, handing it to him.

Never shall I forget his wild, eager look, as he fairly shouted:

"Gold! gold! gold! As I live, gold! Hurrah! Our fortune is made!"

In a moment I was as much excited as he; and, forgetting everything else, we both began a hurried search along the bed of the stream for gold. We found it in particles—here, there, and everywhere—sparkling like fire beneath the light of our torch; and while we gathered it, looking eagerly among the rocks on every side for some enriching vein, we indulged in the wildest dreams of wealth and ambition.

Time passed unheeded, our torch burned low, and yet we thought of nothing but gold.

At last, coming back down the stream, towards the edge of the dark abyss, my companion saw something that drew him forward in haste. I perceived his danger, and shouted:

"Have a care!"

The words had not done echoing through the subterranean gloom, when there was a sudden slip, the dashing forward of a human body, an agonizing scream, the ghastly gleam of a swiftly descending torch, and then I was all alone in the bowels of the earth, in the most appalling darkness.

For a time I was bewildered and stupefied, and I sat down there in the rayless darkness, moaning, and wringing my hands. Then I shouted the name of my companion many times, and begged him to answer me, though I knew it was all in vain. Echo alone responded—an awful echo—that finally died out far away in the terrific gloom.

At last I aroused myself to thoughts of my own preservation. Fortunately I had brought with me the means of striking a light, and one bundle of sticks was still in my possession.

I lighted the last torch, cast around me one terrified glance, and hurried away from the roaring water, that was singing the funeral dirge of my late companion.

My presence here now is a proof that I reached the outer world alive; but more than once I was in despair, believing I had lost my way. After that I had a long, weary journey back to Port-au-Prince, and it was not till near the close of the fourth day that I came in sight of the town. It rained a great deal during those four days, and, after being completely drenched, I was often exposed to a scorching sun.

The effect of all this was a fever, which kept me on my bed for six weeks, during which time my life was more than once despaired of; and it was nearly four months from my first attack before I was again fit for business.

My purse having now become pretty low, I bethought me of my golden cave, and at once endeavoured to turn it to some account.

I mentioned my discovery to several different parties, telling them, at the same time, the sad tale of the loss of my companion.

Most of them listened with indifference, saying they did not think gold enough could be found there to defray the expense of searching for it; and I was about to give up the idea of making any money out of it, when I fortunately met with a speculating Frenchman, who asked me what sum I would require to guide him to the cavern and relinquish all claim to whatever might be found within.

I named a sum equivalent to five thousand pounds, and, after considerable arguing, he offered me four thousand, which I finally accepted.

I guided him to the grotto, conducted him to the subterranean stream—at which I shuddered as I again beheld it—showed him the little sparkles of gold, and received my promised reward. I never saw him afterwards, but heard that he made a fortune by his purchase.

That four thousand pounds, so strangely acquired, I may say was my first real start in life. With that I began to trade in different articles, buying and selling, and, two years afterwards, returned to England in a vessel freighted by myself.

I was prosperous in all my undertakings, and, twenty years ago, retired from business, having what I considered to be enough of this world's goods.

E. B.

PATRIARCHS OF THE LAW.—"Dod's Book of Digests" affords the following extraordinary instances of longevity among our great men of the law:—Ex-Chancellor Brougham, 89 years; Ex-Chancellor St. Leonards, 86; Ex-Chancellor of Ireland, Blackburne, 85; Ex-Judge Lord Wensleydale, 85; Ex-Chief Justice of Ireland, Lefroy, 91; Ex-Chief Baron Pollock, 84; Acting Judge of Admiralty, Lushington, 85. Total age of seven persons 604 years. This gives an average to each of more than 86 years and 5 months. But if the exact birthday were given, it is probable the average would reach 87.

THERE IS LOVE.

WHAT is the name of the sentiment with which we regard a dear father or a brother? Is it not love? I do not believe there is a man or woman, fifty years old, who has not loved truly, perhaps more than once in their life; for I am not so foolish as to believe that "true love" can only be felt once. A man may win the warm love of a woman's heart by his gentlemanly bearing and agreeable manners. To her he will seem to be good, truthful, sincere, manly; but, after an intimate acquaintance, she discovers that he is shallow, heartless, dissipated and base.

If her love begins to wane, and at last dies out entirely, does that prove that there is no such thing as "love"? No, indeed! On the contrary, it proves there is pure, true love—just what she felt for him while supposing him a man—one to trust and rely on. Just what she might have always felt had he been so. But, when she found him only of poorest clay, nearer a beast than a man, that love gave place to contempt. But, if she should afterwards find one who was "all her fancy painted him," and should lose her heart to him, it would not signify that the former case was not love. She would have loved him always, perhaps, if he had been what she thought.

Sometimes women are deceived till after marriage. When they find out what their husbands really are they wonder they could ever have loved them, and conclude they never did—that 'twas only a fancy, and that there is no such thing as love. Had that man been to his wife as he was in the days of wooing she would have loved him the same as then.

Men are as often disappointed in their wives, and find them far from what they thought, and thus cease to love them. Then the case is similar, and they declare there is no love. They too are mistaken. I know there are shallow, fickle beings—many of them—who cannot love one object very long or very warmly; and yet what they feel is love, only their natures are so shallow it cannot be very fervid.

Some love passionately, some calmly, some trustingly, and others suspiciously. That argument, that it cannot be love when mixed with jealousy, is entirely unfounded. Those who love the most warmly and passionately are oftenest the most jealous. They lack what few in love possess, a perfect trust in their own power of fascination.

I do not suppose I have settled the last doubt in everybody's mind, but I trust I have done as much towards proving there is love as "Wildwood" did in proving there was not.

E.

VIRGINIA.

CHAPTER LXIII.

SEYMOUR went first to his sister, full of eager gratitude; for had she not restored him to his wife and spared her the misery of knowing how unworthy he was?

Ellen told him of the wedding, bitterly, for she almost hated Clarence Brooks and the girl he was about to marry. But she did not dream of the awful blow her words dealt to the unhappy man who was now released from his imprisonment; indeed the resentment she felt towards those two persons must have been overpowering to break through the joy that filled her heart when she knew positively that her brother was free, and through her intercession.

Seymour left her without a word, but looking very pale. He had no time to lose.

While Ellen stood where he had left her, lost in painful wonder, Brian came in. He had gone to the prison, hoping to see his brother, and there heard the news of his pardon. Knowing well where he would go first, the happy youth followed him to Ellen's residence.

"Where is he? Has he gone in there—was he glad? Now, now, Ellen, she will get well again. It was only pining."

Brian was so full of joy that he forgot his promise

—forgot that Ellen was still ignorant of their brother's marriage.

"What do you mean, Brian? What does all this mean? Alfred came to see me, beaming with happiness, and left me like a ghost when I told him that this was the wedding-day of Clarence Brooks and Cora Lander."

"And he did not see her?"

"He saw no one but me, and scarcely that. What does this mean, Brian? He seemed like marble when I told him of Cora Lander's wedding."

"Ellen, tell me one thing—did your lady know our brother?"

"No."

"Has she ever been for days together in London?"

"No; I have been with her every day, almost every hour. No, I say."

"Ellen, Ellen Nolan, is she—tell me truly—is she breaking her heart for him?"

"For him? No, no, a thousand times no. She has never seen him alone in her life."

Brian looked around, frightened.

"Which way did he go, Ellen?"

"Towards the station. But what does this mean? I will know."

"Hush, Ellen; I hear a train coming—kiss me—pray for us—pray for him most of all."

He was gone: she saw him fleeing down the cross-road in desperate haste, never looking to the right or left, but straight forward, as if the race was for his life. She saw him stop suddenly. The train was passing by—he was too late.

Yes, he was too late.

But the boy walked on, and in another minute commenced running again.

This delay left Seymour to his own wild self till that note was written, and Cora Lander came down to the summer-house, where he stood waiting for her.

She passed in at the door and stood by his side, throwing the lace shawl back upon her shoulders.

"You have sent for me under a threat. I am here to listen, if you have anything to say."

Her voice was hard and sharp as steel; her eyes glinted fiercely.

He looked at her and reached out his arms with such a cry of tender anguish that it thrilled the very air.

"Oh, Cora! Cora! this cannot be! Tell me that it is not the truth!"

She stood like a statue, neither repelling nor accepting his embrace. His arms fell heavily downward, a groan broke from his lips.

"Will you not speak to me, Cora?" he cried.

"I have nothing to say, Alfred Nolan."

"Alfred Nolan! Great heavens! has it reached her at last?"

"It reached me at first—before you were put into the prison, where you should have hidden yourself for ever had my will availed anything. I knew all that you had done and felt all the shame of having been your wife even for an hour."

The poor man raised both hands to his face, and cried out:

"Oh, heaven—heaven, have mercy upon me!"

"There shall be no mercy for you," she answered, hoarsely, "unless you quit this place at once and for ever. I came here to make this proposal: go to the Indies—go to Australia—I will give you one half of all that I have on earth; secure it to you with bonds that can neither be violated nor evaded. Only go—go! and never let me hear of you again!"

The wretched man shook from head to foot. She saw the agony in his face. That look would have stirred even a harder heart to compassion, but she had none.

"Make up your mind at once. By having become a convict you set me at liberty. The certificate of our marriage is in my hands; the witnesses are beyond your reach; the grave itself never closed over a dead man more firmly than that secret is locked up from all human knowledge."

"Cora! Cora! was this done purposely? Was it in your heart then? Did you never love me?"

"I don't know what was in my heart but supreme folly, of which I have repented. Yes, if you will have it—if it will make you hate me—revolt at the sight of me, as I loathe you—hear the truth. I had ceased to love you before your infamy gave me a reason. It was I that flung you into prison; the man you robbed was only an instrument working out my will without knowing it."

"Oh, have mercy! have mercy! And I loved you so! I loved you so!"

She took no heed of the anguish which broke forth in this cry, but went on, ruthlessly:

"Take my offer—it is a princely fortune, but I am tempted to double it to make sure that these eyes will never see you again. Not that I fear you. Refuse it, come to the house and claim me, as you threatened so delicately in your note, and I will say,

"This man is insane; he is just released from prison; I do not know him." Where is your means of proving that we ever met?"

She broke off, for Seymour seized her by both arms, and, forcing her up to the window, looked wildly into her face.

"Is this my wife? Is this the woman I loved so, or some fiend in her shape? Woman! woman! do not go too far! I reject your money; it was for you—not that—I became criminal. I will not permit the crime you meditate against an honourable man. Tell me that it is a slander, a gross falsehood—that you never thought of marrying Clarence Brooks, or I will claim you before the crowd you have assembled yonder. There is evidence, at any rate, that you lived in the same house with me."

"And I will tell them, as I told him, that it was my cousin, Virginia Lander, who was residing there—she who is so intimate with your hunch-backed sister. They will believe that, and so will he."

Seymour still held her arms; his dark eyes looked into hers.

"Are you a demon?" he exclaimed, wildly. "Is your love for this honourable man such as you gave to me? Would you crush his heart as mine has been crushed?"

"I love Clarence Brooks, the man you robbed, with all my heart and soul. Oh, that makes you writhing! Let go my arms, you are pinching them black and blue, and I am to be married to him this day. In spite of your raving I shall. I did mean to shoot you; but no, I have the courage to dare the worst."

"No, madam," said a deep, grave voice close by her; "neither this day nor ever will you marry Clarence Brooks. He has heard this conversation—your wicked confession arrested him on the threshold of that door. He—"

The woman started upright and turned her haggard face towards him. Her dress shook and rustled as if she were grasping its folds with a trembling hand. With a slow, almost stealthy motion, her hand was lifted to her temple. The click of a pistol followed.

Seymour uttered a cry and attempted to wrest the weapon from her, but too late. The sharp, ringing sound of a shot sounded up the ravine. She fell forward into the arms thrown out to save her, and lay on her husband's breast dying.

The sound of that shot reached the pleasure-grounds where the guests were wandering a little impatiently, for it was now eleven o'clock, and as yet they had seen no signs of the bride and bridegroom. The shot was followed by a wild shriek, and up from the ravine came a boy, flinging up his hands and crying aloud for help. There was a simultaneous rush through the shrubberies.

Seymour was holding in his arms the woman whom they had all been so impatient to see in her bridal-dress. He was trembling, moaning, and weeping over her in a wild passion of sorrow, calling upon her to answer him, look at him, breathe so that he could hear the life stir within that bosom. But when the frightened crowd came up he hushed his grief and looked down upon her who was now still as death.

Clarence Brooks was on his knees also, pressing a handkerchief to the wounded temple, which was blackened a little and bled slowly.

"Here is the physician; I found him at last," said Brian Nolan, addressing his brother.

Seymour raised his haggard face, and a gleam of hope came into it.

An eminent physician, who had been invited among the guests, touched Mr. Brooks on the shoulder, who arose and resigned his place.

There was no hope; the lady might live through the day, but that would be more than he could answer for.

How had this terrible thing happened?

She stirred, struggled, and spoke:

"I did it with my own hand."

Then the clergyman came into the summer-house, his long gown flowing around him, exactly as he had put it on for the bridal ceremony.

He too knelt by her side and took her pale hand in his.

"Was it an accident?" he said.

"Yes, I did it!"

Those pale lips only uttered these words.

Question that dying woman as they would, she answered still:

"I did it—I alone—it was an accident."

Neither Seymour nor Clarence Brooks spoke. The crowd considered them no more responsible than themselves. It was natural that the man who had first lifted that dying woman from the ground should be pale and agitated—more natural that the bridegroom, who stood before them in his wedding attire, so still and stricken, should be almost paralyzed by a calamity so dreadful.

No one dreamed that Seymour was not one of the

invited guests; his air, his face, everything about him carried out the idea.

So the pallor and the silence of these men passed for nothing, either with the physician, the clergyman or the crowd.

Cora's lips moved, her eyes opened, and she fixed them on Seymour. He bent down his head, and she whispered:

"Be silent—I charge you."

He whisperingly replied:

"I will, so help me heaven."

The clergyman bent over her with sorrow and compassion in his face.

"Poor lady," he said.

The doctor felt her pulse anxiously. All at once she revived.

"Doctor, must I die?"

"Yes, poor lady; I dare not say otherwise."

She made a painful struggle and turned her head, fixing those eyes, heavy with approaching death, on Mr. Brooks.

The clergyman and doctor saw that she wished to speak with her bridegroom, and made way for him, drawing back towards those who stood around the door.

Mr. Brooks obeyed the sad appeal of those eyes and knelt down, bending his head to hers.

"I am not his child, but the niece he warned you of. Virginia is his daughter. Spare my memory. Tell her it was I, not my poor mother, who did it. He says I must die; deal gently with me then."

"May heaven forgive and pity you as I do."

She turned her eyes round towards Seymour and faintly pressed the hand which was shivering under the coldness that was numbing her fingers. Perhaps some gleam of the old love awoke in that last hour, for he remembered in after years that it was his bosom she turned to at last.

"Forgive me, Alfred!"

"I do—I do!"

"Do not let them cast shame on my grave."

"No, no, I will perish first. Oh, Cora, my wife! my wife! would to heaven I could die for you!"

Her hand fell away from his, those beautiful eyes closed, her limbs stretched out suddenly, and the stillness of death fell over her.

CHAPTER LXIV.

A MAN lay ill almost unto death in that stone farmhouse. Fever was preying upon his brain; an awful sorrow gnawed at his heart. He did not even know that sweet-voiced, gentle sister who watched over him so faithfully, or the wild-eyed boy who stood hours together at the foot of his bed, praying for him as only good, true-hearted youth can pray.

Virginia Lander, too, came and went among them with kindly soothing, though her own heart was filled with gloomy anxieties; for she knew that an inquest had been held in her father's house, and that her cousin, the young girl she had once loved so dearly, lay cold and dead, shrouded in the marriage garments that had been prepared for her wedding. She knew that Cora's own account of her death had been received unquestioned by the jury. Indeed, what other reason could be given for the violent death of a young creature so richly endowed and whose path through life seemed altogether among roses—a creature who did not seem to have an enemy on earth?

Neither Clarence Brooks nor Alfred Nolan was questioned, but the servants confirmed the account that unhappy woman gave of her death. Having a little time, while the dressmaker was altering her wedding-robe, she had put on another and gone out, doubtless, as she said, to take leave of a place made dear by loving associations. There she had met her death.

It was a strange fancy for a young bride to indulge in; but the morning was beautiful, and she had loved that place from childhood, when it had been her playhouse. Some said that it was in this summer-house she had first seen Clarence Brooks.

So, in place of a scandal, the crowd of persons who had gone to a wedding and witnessed a death-bed, went home weaving beautiful romances, which no one ever contradicted.

Cora Lander had besought those she had wronged to spare her memory, and they did spare it, with religious sacredness.

While Seymour lay in his first illness, and Virginia shared Ellen's duties in the sick-room, Mr. Stone came from the marble house and besought her to go home. The will, he said, left Amos Lander's property to his niece, after the daughter's death, so there was no need of any question of identity being gone into at all.

He had brought her a letter from Clarence Brooks, the gentleman to whom her cousin would have been married, but for the sad accident which had deprived

her so suddenly of life. Would she read the letter before they started?

Virginia took the letter into her own room, and read it alone, with tears, prayers and mournful thanksgiving. It told her everything that the reader knows. It told her more; though there was not one word of love in all those closely written pages she knew, as well as if it had been printed there in letters of gold, that in Clarence Brooks's heart there had been no real unfaithfulness. He did not say this in words; but it pervaded the whole letter as plainly as if it had been lying close to his heart for a year.

So Virginia, feeling this to be her higher duty, went back to the home which was now all her own. There Clarence Brooks met her at the door. They looked into each other's faces in mournful silence, and, without a word, he led her upstairs into the room from which Cora had driven her so rudely little more than a year before. There upon a bed, pure and cold as snow, she found all that was left of this haughty woman.

The mother, ignorant of that other marriage, which made the bridal-dress a mockery, had insisted that the satin robe, in all its rich amplitude, should go with her down to the grave. She lay there, calm and still, like a young bride sleeping. The rich folds of her hair had been drawn in waves over the wound on her temple, concealing it entirely. The veil fell over her face, like frostwork on the white rose. All that had been bright and blooming about her had vanished into utter whiteness.

Up to that time a bitter sense of wrong had lingered in Virginia's heart against Cora Lander. But it melted now into tender forgiveness when she saw her lying there in the sacred repose of death. She lifted the veil, which cast its faint shadows over her face, and kissed the lips that had wronged her so. When she turned away holy tears fell on the network of that shrouding lace, touching proofs of her forgiveness.

She was about to leave the room when her progress was stopped by Eunice Hurd, who came in, supporting Mrs. Lander with one arm, and followed by Joshua, whose eyes were red with weeping.

"Miss Virginia, we have come here to say how wrong—"

"Hush!" said Virginia, pointing to the bed. "Spare her; we know everything. Do not be troubled, Eunice; I can never forget how truly you were my friend when I needed one so much. Aunt Lander, for her sake let us be friends. But we must not talk here."

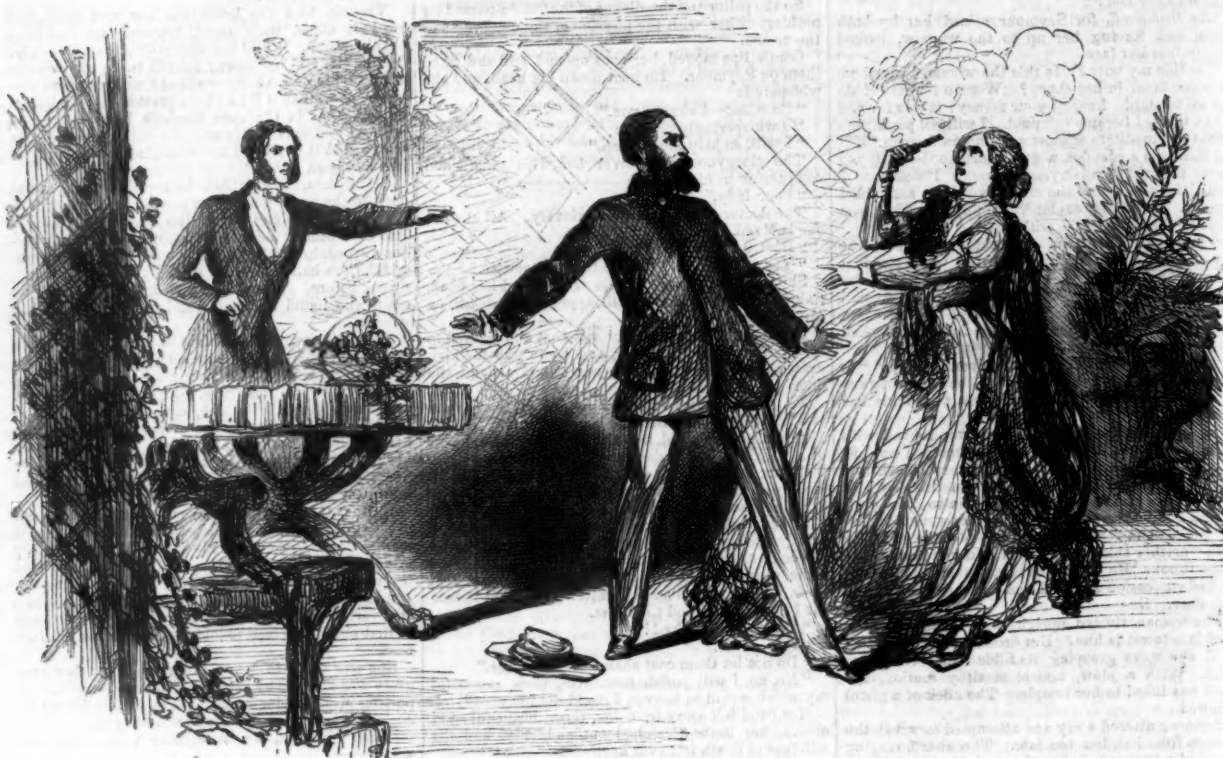
Mrs. Lander looked piteously into her sweet face. She saw nothing but forgiveness there, and the tears began to tremble in her eyes. She cast a glance at the bed, and in a low, broken voice, tried to take the blame on herself as she was going out.

"It was me. My child! my poor child! it was for my sake she did it!"

"Eliza, don't say that; don't say anything. Let the dead bury the dead. But there is one thing that she did not know, and couldn't have told. Miss Virginia, that poor young creature that they seemed to have buried for ever, is my own niece, and Joshua is her uncle. Eliza Lander here is our younger sister, and she wants us to say so. This trouble has taken all the pride out of her. She ain't ashamed to own her poor relations now. She wanted to live with us, and we wanted to live with her; but she was a lady born, and we were not. But we were not mean enough to want to mortify her amongst her husband's connections, so we came here. All she asked was that we should take some other name, so that we shouldn't be found out, and we did. After this, it's sister Eliza Lander's wish that we should resume the old name, but I won't. She's a lady, and I'm proud of it. But I am nothing of that sort, nor is Joshua. We've told you the truth, because secrets in a family lie very heavy on the mind; but as to the rest of the world, it's not their business. So my name is Eunice Hurd, and his is Joshua Hurd. Here is Eliza Lander, and we two are her servants. Where she goes we mean to go, where she lives we shall be, and we mean to be buried in the same graveyard with her. If she's sent out of this house poor we'll work for her. She's the only lady our family ever had in it, and we'll work our fingers to the bone before she shall want her lace cap and silk gown, as she always had 'em when Amos Lander was alive and you two cousins were little girls."

"She shall never want anything that I can give her, nor shall you, my faithful friends. Aunt Lander, do be comforted, it breaks my heart to see you looking so old and careworn." She wiped away the tears from her heavy eyes, and kissed that poor grieving mouth with more than a daughter's tenderness. "Take great care of her, Eunice, and tell her that, while we can help it, she shall have no more troubles."

Here Joshua came forward.



[THE SUICIDE OF CORA LANDER.]

"I'll take such care of Snowball—cover her with roses if you say so. I'll take good care of the black horse too, for her sake, for, after all, she was my own niece."

When this conversation commenced Brooks and Virginia had quietly withdrawn from the chamber of death and closed the door, but Joshua spoke low when he alluded to the young creature lying within, and took off the hat which had hitherto covered his head, with that natural reverence which all, even ignorant men, pay to death.

"Take charge of everything, Eunice, for, when all is over, I must go back to the farm-house. Ellen has a brother there very ill."

He was indeed very ill, nigh unto death, and so he lay for many a weary week. Ellen's book came out, while he was at the worst, and she scarcely knew of it, though its fame went far and wide, reaching distant lands, and critics pronounced it to be a work of wonderful promise. She had no thoughts to give from that sick-bed, where the son her father had charged her to save, with his last words, lay suffering.

Clarence Brooks found his way to that farm-house, and strove to comfort the young man who lay there with more than his old friendliness.

One day, when Alfred Nolan had slightly recovered, and was looking wistfully in Brian's face, the boy crept close to his bed, and took the hand his brother held out.

"Brother," he said; "it was I who brought all this trouble upon you. I followed you. I was afraid that something would happen. I heard the threats from her voice and went after Mr. Brooks. He was in a chamber of the house, ready and waiting to be called by pleasanter messengers than I was. But, when I told him that a man was in peril, he seized his hat and followed me. If his coming caused what happened afterwards, I am to blame. Forgive me, Alfred; I intended no wrong. Forgive me, if you would not have it rest on my heart for ever."

"My poor boy," said the invalid, faintly; "there was no fault in what you did. Heaven was working out our punishment, and it came. It was better to have our lives end so than in deeper sin. I thought these things over very solemnly in the prison yonder. I have thought them over here since our sister gave me word for word that last message from our father. She is dead, but heaven is merciful, and who shall say that the last moments of her young life were not spent in asking for that Divine forgiveness which is not limited by time or space?"

Alfred Nolan lay still, and with his eyes closed

some minutes after he uttered these words. When he spoke again it was more calmly.

"Brian?"

"Well, brother?"

"This is no place for us. I could never bear rest here. But far away lie vast countries, rich in minerals, fertile in soil, and so far from what we call social life that a man can live by himself and learn to grow strong. Heaven is giving me back life, Brian. I am young, and must no longer be an idle or useless man. Will you go with me, Brian?"

"I will go with you anywhere, brother."

Ellen came in then, bringing a cup of tea for the invalid.

Brian, with all a boy's eagerness, asked her if she would go with them.

"Nay," interposed Alfred; "she is feeble. She must be left behind."

She looked at her elder brother, and quick tears came into her eyes, while she repeated, with sweet, impressive earnestness, the words of Ruth to her mother:

"Ask me not to leave thee, or cease from following after thee. Whither thou goest, I will go."

No more was said that day, for neither Alfred nor Brian could speak, their hearts were too full.

But it was agreed that the brothers should go first, and prepare a home for Ellen, who would get the money her book was bringing in for their use, write another, and make arrangements with the publishers for more, that were yet to proceed from her fertile brain.

She thanked heaven that her work could be done anywhere.

Alfred wondered at the prompt, business-like way in which all this was said; but he had yet to learn that real, absolute genius is as comprehensive as nature itself. Those who confine it to simple romance dwarf heaven's greatest gift to man.

When Clarence Brooks heard what Alfred Nolan had decided upon he resolved to go with him, for Nolan absolutely refused to accept the money which Brooks had almost forced upon him, and he resolved to invest it there for him, hoping that it would at last find acceptance.

So, after a few weeks, these two men, who had travelled before together, bridged the awful chasm that had separated them, and went away, taking Brian with them. Ellen went back to the marble house, and joined Virginia in the tranquil life she led there.

About a year from this time Brooks came back again, strengthened and rendered cheerful by the

constant change and excitement he had passed through.

A month after that there was a quiet little wedding in that marble mansion, so quiet that the daily journals brought the first news of it to those who had been invited to that other sumptuous affair, which ended so fatally.

At many a breakfast-table that morning the news was read aloud, and more than once it was followed by this exclamation:

"So Clarence Brooks has married Amos Lander's heiress after all. So much alike, they say. The bridesmaids—why, there was only one, the author of that book everybody is talking about! Would you believe it? She is a hunchback, but so talented and petite. Such lovely eyes and hair, too. Mrs. — had it from her publishers."

The next month Ellen Nolan went to her brother, who had used his scientific learning to great purpose, and was opening up sources of prosperity in the far-away land, with his knowledge, which many a hard-working man availed himself of, working the same mines and gathering the same gold, which was fast raising him into that respectability and independence which honourable labour, either of the mind or hands, alone can bring.

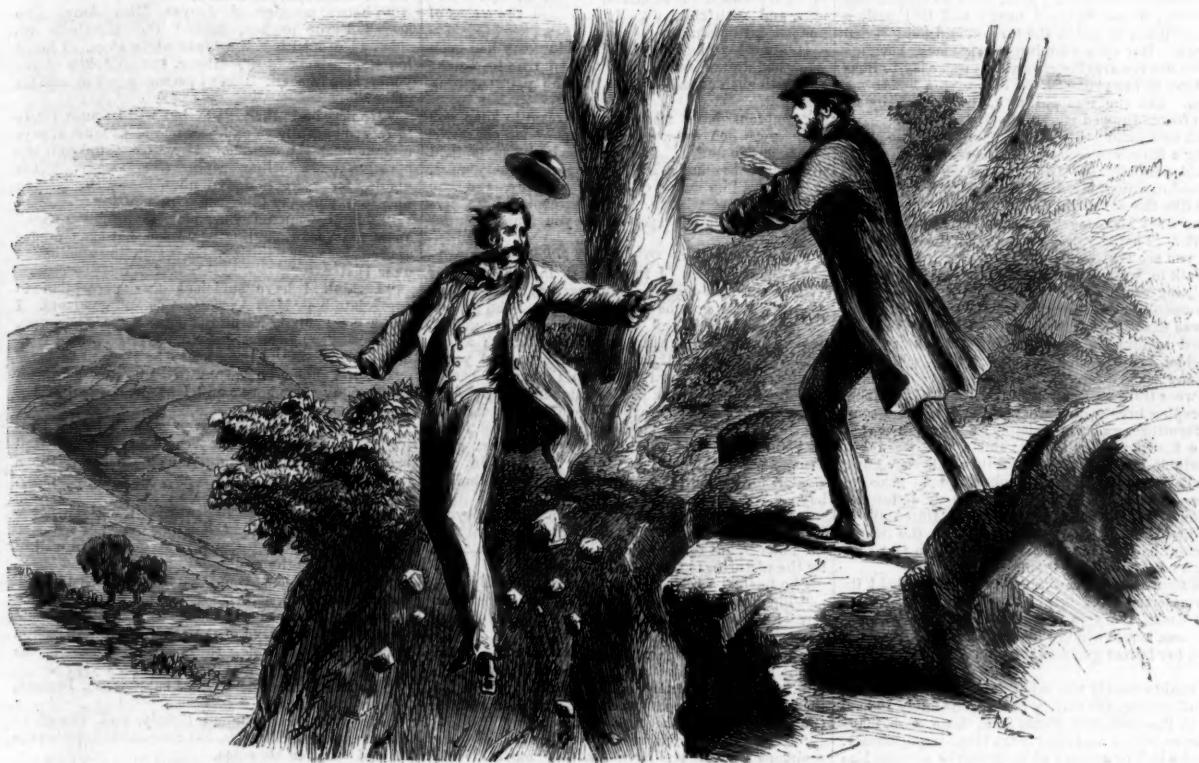
Ellen keeps his house; she has plenty of flowers all around the dwelling, and so many vines clambering over it that it looks more like a mammoth bird's nest than a human habitation. But, though she loves flowers, and seeks to hide coarser things with them, at the back of that house you may find a well-kept vegetable garden, which Brian takes care of, and which the young girl, who went with them, sometimes vigorously works in, when there is nothing to be done indoors.

Especially she goes out when her young mistress is writing by that little window, curtained with morning glories; for then it seems almost wrong to tread hard upon the floor, and she feels as if she should hold her breath as she moves about.

Ellen is reading a letter from Mrs. Clarence Brooks, who proposed during the summer to take a trip with her husband. She wrote to know if there was an unoccupied room for them.

Ellen has taken up her pen, which shakes in her hand; but she is able to write that unoccupied room are unheard of in that part of the country, but a new residence, opening into theirs, will be erected before her friends can get there. In fact, Alfred will have it commenced at once, that she may have flowers growing over it when they come.

THE END.



[A CATASTROPHE.]

AMYAS AYRE.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. ARNOLD GRANGER and the Daytons, despite the earnest solicitations of the whole family at Ingleside, took up their quarters at the hotel; but as the distance was short, and they came regularly in the early morning to obtain the day's programme, they were still one party to all intents and purposes.

Rose Ingalls was in the gayest spirits apparently, and entered with zeal into all their plans. She soon commenced a desperate flirtation with the polished and courtly Arthur Dayton, which not only drove poor John Armitage nearly out of his wits but somehow annoyed Victor exceedingly, though he could not assign a reason for its doing so.

On the third day after the arrival of the expected guests an excursion was planned to a neighbouring hill, and a picnic among its romantic shades, and everyone was gay with anticipation.

"We might take two or three more," observed Rose, when Victor was arranging the mode of transit. "There will be several vacant seats in the carriages."

"The more the merrier!" observed Arthur Dayton, who was sure to be always within hearing of that young lady's sprightly tones.

"To be sure," echoed Arnold Granger, who happened to be near. "Let us have a goodly company."

Victor was silent. There was a mingled expression of irresolution and annoyance on his face. Rose glanced at him a little defiantly, as she suggested: "Why not invite your dear friends the Ayres, Victor?"

"What, that young artist whom we met on the first day of our arrival?" exclaimed Arnold Granger, his face kindling into an interest beyond anything they had witnessed since his appearance among them. "By all means secure him if it be possible. He is one of the most interesting young men I ever met."

"But Amyas will bear no comparison with his sister Amy, will he, Victor?" pursued Rose, a little maliciously.

"She certainly cannot be handsomer than he is," replied Arnold; "for he was decidedly the most like a model of any masculine face I ever saw."

"They are very much like. Amyas is darker, has that rich brunette tint to which his red cheeks are so becoming, and his sister is fair and white as a lily."

But their features, even their eyes, are of one mould. They are twins, you know."

"Nobody knows anything about them—whence they came, whither they go, what they do," said Ned Weston.

"Amyas Ayre is an artist," retorted Victor, quickly. "Amy paints likewise—fairly hints of the woods and the garden on ivory, wood and porcelain," chimed in Annie Haldeman, a look of indignation in her blue eyes which made Ned wince a little; but he stood his ground.

"You cannot deny that there is a great deal of mystery about them. They never have any visitors, any correspondence from friends or acquaintances. They seem entirely alone. For more than two years no one has ever known them allude to any connexions or relatives. They seem to be without any past whatever."

"I do not feel myself called upon to investigate the antecedents of my friends, so long as they themselves please me and are honest and true," returned Victor, coldly.

"I beg your pardon, Victor. I know how intimate you are with them; but confess the truth, and say if you don't think it looks queer for them to live in such seclusion, and to shut up their house so thoroughly from the observation of the town. What secret can it be which makes that weird-looking woman keep such jealous guard over the place?"

"I do not ask people for their secrets, only for their friendship. But I wish there were more in the world as guileless and inoffensive as the Ayres," returned Victor.

They are certainly very interesting and gifted, and entirely different, somehow, from all young people I ever met. They will make a brilliant addition to the party. If you go to them, there may be a chance of obtaining their consent."

"I will go," said Victor, suddenly, walking into the hall for his hat as he spoke.

Arnold Granger followed him.

"Would there be any harm in my accompanying you? I am singularly interested in them—in the artist, rather."

Victor was not pleased at this proposal, but he answered, courteously:

"You are welcome to walk with me to the cottage. I cannot promise that you will be admitted. Ned is right there. Old Sheba keeps a most jealous guard; no one is ever allowed to pass in and out freely. The Ayres undoubtedly have their secret. It is a singular circumstance that such young people should be entirely isolated. You never hear the slightest

allusion to any kith or kin of theirs, any more than if they had dropped down from the moon. Well, I said it was their secret. I am willing they should keep it. Whatever it may be—whether imbecile father, a maniac mother, or felon brother, I am not so impatient to know; I can wait their own time of telling it, and they are not in such desperate need of friends that they must parley to obtain them. Come with me, if you like. It is a pleasant walk, and their cottage is like a woodland bower."

And Arnold Granger and Victor Haldeman walked together along the pleasant country road, whose hedges were sparkling with the early dew; the latter turned down a bye-lane, and led the way towards a little white cottage, built amidst embowering green, on the bank of a placid, slow-gliding river. A square of noble old elms surrounded the house, and there was lattice-work scattered here and there, over which roses twined their luxuriant sprays, while the front walls of the house and the rustic porch were completely draped with a flourishing-looking vine, with a scarlet tongue-like blossom shimmering like flakes of fire from the glossy green leafage.

"It looks like a nightingale's nest," said Arnold Granger, thoughtfully, "or a lark's. As if its occupant's soul might go soaring up into the blue sky above, hynning its song of praise and gladness."

Victor made no reply. He silently opened the little gate, and walked up the path, which was formed of a high raised boarding—a peculiar arrangement, giving forth a loud echo beneath their tread.

He smiled as he saw his companion's inquiring look, and explained, softly:

"It is a step higher than the bell. It gives warning of approach before a visitor reaches the door. You will see Sheba's red turban at the hall window in a moment."

Scarcely were the words spoken ere there was a glimpse of a swarthy face with long gold ear-rings and red turban looking out of the window and vanishing again.

"It is always so," said Victor, with a good-humoured expression in his eyes. "No dragon ever kept more vigilant guard over enchanted princess than Sheba over her charge whatever it may be. She is worthy of notice on her own account. Let us walk leisurely, and give her time."

The door was opened promptly to his summons, and Sheba, with a broad smile on her face, gave him a hearty welcome. She was a powerfully framed woman, with an arm which might well be formidable to many men. Her skin had the dusky tinge betray-

ing the mingling of African blood, but her long black hair, except for its crinkly look, gave no sign of her extraction; it was braided neatly and tied with a crimson ribbon to match the turban, and hung down her back. Her eyes were large and black, her lips full, but not remarkably coarse. It was easy to imagine that in her prime Sheba had been a handsome woman. But she was old now, and though by no means feeble showed marks of age and trials.

With one hand still on the door-knob she stood looking a little suspiciously at the new comer; but she said, cordially:

"Good-morning, Mr. Haldeman. You have always a face like the sunshine."

"Can I see Mr. Amyas or Miss Amy, Sheba? either or both? Thank you for your compliment, Sheba. Don't you see that I only reflect your good nature?"

"Walk in, walk in, sir. Miss Amy is painting in the sitting-room. Will you go in there?" And Sheba opened a door for them at the end of the hall.

It was exactly such a picture as he had vaguely outlined to himself after hearing their story, and it touched Arnold Granger.

A long room with open windows, across which vines were trailing, flinging in their subtle fragrance, and peeping here and there with bud and blossom. The furniture was very simple; a common carpet on the floor, ordinary chairs, and a well-worn but comfortable-looking lounge. But the walls were hung with choice prints; carved brackets upheld graceful groups of statuary, vases filled with wild flowers, and lovely ferns; heaps of delicately tinted shells were arranged, with such grace that the whole apartment had a more pleasing effect than many an elegant, costly drawing-room.

The figure at the small oval table which held its pretty assortment of bright-hued palettes, trays of tinoid flasks, ivory paper-folders, and one glowing white vase, across which Flora herself seemed to have twined her fairest garland, arrested Arnold Granger's eye.

He could scarcely tell what it was—whether the graceful outline, the stately poise of the finely shaped head, or the clear, soft gleam from those deep, magnetic eyes, which made his heart throb tumultuously. But not a look or gesture of Amy Ayre's escaped him while he was there. He needed no assurance from Victor Haldeman that she was of a finer grain, a nobler mould, than most women.

She had laid aside her brush, carelessly thrown off her brown linen apron, and stood with outstretched hands and smiling lips, looking into Victor Haldeman's face.

"Good-morning, Mr. Haldeman. You are out early to-day."

"Unusually early, I admit; and, with my accustomed audacity, I come to crave a boon. But allow me to introduce to you my friend Mr. Granger. Miss Ayre, Mr. Granger."

She turned with graceful ease, bowed her acknowledgment of Arnold's respectful greeting, but did not offer him her hand.

"Be seated, I pray you," said she, in a calm voice, which was still clear and melodious as a harp string. "My brother tells me you are merry now at Ingleside, Mr. Haldeman. I hope Annie and Rose are well, and can enjoy it heartily?"

"Quite well, thank you. They have sent me to implore for your company. We are making up a party for the sea-side and intend to spend the day. We want you and Amyas so much. Please be good enough to say you will come!"

She looked down thoughtfully a moment ere she replied, with that bright smile illuminating her eyes as well as her lip:

"It is very tempting, but I am afraid I must make excuses. Amyas may go, but I must remain at the cottage."

Not only Victor's face showed its disappointment, but Arnold's likewise.

"I have learned that there is no appeal from your own or your brother's decision," said the former, ruefully.

"But for this time—" said Arnold, eagerly, and then stopped abruptly, silenced by a look of haughty astonishment in her eyes.

"Amyas needs a holiday more than I. He has been closely at work on his woodland scene," continued Amy, quietly. "I hope he will accept your kind invitation, Mr. Haldeman."

"Shall I find him in the cottage?" asked Victor.

"I suspect not. But he may be in the garden. Sheba will tell you."

She made a movement towards the door, but the young man anticipated her intention.

"Let me look in the garden myself. And while I am absent would you be so good as to delight Mr. Granger with a glimpse of your fairy workmanship?" He was gone ere she could remonstrate, if indeed she had cherished any such idea, and Amy Ayre was left alone with Arnold Granger.

She was in no way embarrassed, but quietly brought forward vases, boxes, book-racks, and drawings, and with calm dignity exhibited the traces of her patient brush.

It almost seemed that living blossoms had been wreathed around each pretty toy, so true to nature and with such exquisite taste had the painting been wrought.

"You must have many a fairy dream to keep you company, when you are at work upon such charming creations," observed Arnold, admiringly, as he held up a vase bearing a little clump of feathery moss, with a trailing vine of partridge-berry, and one vivid cluster of arbutus. "The brownies, I am certain, led you to the spot where you found this design."

She smiled softly.

"You are right. I found that in a spot fit for Titania's throne-room. There was a wide canopy of great strong boughs above, shutting off the powerful rays of the sun, and only allowing a few golden arrows to slip through the interlacing limbs; a tiny brook, clear as even the fountain of perpetual youth could be, slipped silently between the mossy banks, only breaking into tinkling laughter as it leaped over a great white rock; the arbutus peeped forth through the dry debris of last year's fallen glory, and found that the ferns and partridge-berry were in good case, so took heart to bloom royally in this cluster, for all the patch of snow lying in the hollow beyond."

"And so you have given it an immortality beyond its feeble dreaming. That was kind, not only for the flowers, but to the eyes which shall be gladdened by the picture. Is the vase bespoken?"

She flushed a little, and answered, hurriedly:

"They are all for one shop. I fancy there are few of the customers there who will wish for the flower's history."

"May I inquire the number and street?"

She reached carelessly for a card, and handed it to him, but her hand trembled slightly. He put it into his pocket, and turned again to the table, examining the rest of the vases.

"Here is one with sea-mosses and shells; but somehow I fancy you have not the hearty love for them as you have for moss and wild flowers. There is no such loving touch."

A rich smile broke over her face, as she answered:

"You are right. They were ordered, and so I painted them. The sea is very grand and magnificent, but the woods have a more comforting voice, a subtler witchery for me. Here is something, however, which pleases me."

She brought forth a small square of canvas, and showed a glimpse of a river bank. There were the feathery grasses drooping from the damp mould, the sprays of nodding catch-fly, with their topaz gleam, the creamy spires of cletra, a bunch of starry dwarf sunflowers, and one vivid stalk of cardinal, all mirrored in the clear water, over which a little circle of tiny gnats were sporting on their gauzy wings.

"It is lovely, faithful to life, but I find most pleasure in the woodland scene. I do not like rivers," retorted he, with a slight shudder, for the ghastly face which haunted him seemed to look forth from the picture.

"That is odd. We are very fond of river scenes. We would not change our situation for any inducement."

"I daresay. But a river suggests painful memories to me. A river caused a very cruel thing once. It left a scar on my heart which will last me through my whole life."

She raised her large, serious eyes, and never moved them from his face. He was pale and shuddering, and drew her tender compassion towards him as the sun draws the dew.

"I am sorry," said she, faltering, "and I am not sure I understand you."

"How should you?" answered he, in a weary tone. "But there is something about you which reminds me, all the time I have been in your presence, of the bitter trouble of my life. I could never talk to anyone about it, much as it would soothe the rankling pain, and yet I think I could tell it to you."

"If I could help you," began she, and then stopped. "You would do it without doubt, compassionate heart! But it is one of those things which are so much more terrible just for that, that the past holds them, and there is no help possible. But if I come to know you, and you are willing to give me your friendship, I could tell you about it, and remove the marble mask I wear before the world, and show you the restless, remorseful, unsatisfied heart beneath—tell you of the ghost which always, always haunts my path."

He spoke in a low, wistful voice, with his eyes still on the river picture.

"If I can help you," said Amy Ayre, in a voice that was hardly audible, "I shall be ready, any time."

There was no time for further private speech, for Victor Haldeman came back.

"There's no sign of Amyas, Miss Amy. I've searched the garden, turned the blue-bells inside out, peeped into the birds' nests even. I found his sketch-book in the arbour, but no token of the young man himself. Can't I persuade you to take his place?"

"He may be in the village, but will be most likely to return speedily. You know one of us must always remain near the cottage. His absence makes it imperative that I decline," replied she, gravely. "It is his day for recreation, and mine for work. If you find him, you may take him with you."

"It shall come on your play-day the next time," answered Victor, smilingly. "I see that Mr. Granger appreciates your painting. He is standing spellbound over that vase."

"I think I have sufficient fine perception to appreciate both Miss Ayre's genius and goodness. I thank you heartily for allowing me to come with you, Haldeman," answered Arnold, rousing himself from his abstraction. "I hope I may be allowed to come again, and suggest a garland to be painted as a souvenir of my visit here; and I bespeak a pair of the largest vases yonder."

Amy Ayre was bending over her palette, and returned no answer, though Arnold's eyes were fixed upon her face beseechingly. Victor bit his lip a little angrily, though he scarcely understood why, and made a hasty adieu.

Their latest glance backward showed them the fair artist, brush in hand, bending over her work.

"Well?" said Victor, as the two gentlemen walked slowly back to the road.

"The half of her fascination was not hinted to me," answered Arnold, as briefly.

Not another word was spoken until they had wound around the long curve of the road, and came again in view of the river which they had seen last at the Ayre cottage. Then Victor observed, dryly:

"You will order the vases, I suppose, for Barbara, Mr. Granger?"

Arnold Granger laughed lightly, and, though he did not mean to betray it, his companion detected the ring of scorn in his voice.

"It may be that they will ultimately come into her possession, but for a gift she would by far prefer a pair of French gilt. I should not venture to offer these."

Victor switched off the golden heads of the blossoms on the bank with his cane, and looked discontented and suspicious; but his face suddenly cleared.

"Why, there's Amyas! We will not lose him. He is out in his boat." And, approaching the river bank, he shouted, "Ho, idle dreamer, turn your shallop this way!"

A tiny skiff was drifting with the tide. The artist sat with his arms folded across the oars, his head drooping abtractedly. He looked up at the voice, made a graceful gesture, took the oars, and was presently landed at the bank.

We have been to the cottage for you, and since we could not persuade your sister are determined to secure you," declared Victor.

"In what cause, I pray you?"

"A good one; a day's entertainment. We have a picnic party made up. Miss Amy bade us run away with you, and we shall take her advice. Don't hinder us, but come along, like a good fellow. We have already loitered, and I doubt not our friends are impatiently awaiting us."

"Yes, I will go," said Amyas Ayre, slowly.

Arnold Granger looked at him with renewed interest. There was indeed a strong resemblance, as might be expected from twins; but Amy, it seemed to him, was taller, slenderer, and while she was of a pure pale complexion, which only in deep excitement showed delicate pink flushes, Amyas was brown, with a brilliant colour in his cheeks which lighted up his eyes, and made them appear darker and more brilliant than his sister's.

The glossy moustache, and full curling beard reaching almost to the long hair carelessly combed back from his face, gave a haughtier expression to his face. Still there was the same look which on Amy's face had stirred such painful memories in Arnold's mind.

Amyas Ayre threw the light cloak lying in the boat over his arm, and, casting out the anchor of the skiff, came to their side.

"I am at your service, gentlemen," said he.

"Then let us quicken our steps, for I doubt not everyone is waiting. Barbara will fear I have run away with her devoted cavalier, and Rosebud will be calling me all sorts of names," returned Victor, glancing into Arnold Granger's face.

It showed no annoyance at the allusion, and that young gentleman was somewhat at a loss to interpret it satisfactorily.

CHAPTER IX.

THE party set forth in the gayest spirits. Annie Haldeman smiled brightly as Amyas chose his seat in the roomy coach with herself. Mr. Granger and Barbara Leighton occupied the front seat, and Barbara's cheek glowed, likewise, as the young artist took his place.

She soon turned, and, pushing aside her lace veil, began a bantering conversation with Annie, leaving her fiancé to solace himself with the rural beauties of the landscape. She smiled graciously when Amyas Ayre interspersed a witty sentence, and speedily engaged him in a conversation which required no help from their companions. She began a subject likely to interest him, and in choice language, with many an eloquent gesture, described some fine paintings which had just arrived across the water to the picture-gallery. He listened politely, but somewhat coldly. The fashionable belle, exacting and arbitrary, felt piqued to exert herself to the utmost to win a more cordial expression into his listless face, and presently succeeded.

He brightened visibly, and was soon as animated and gallantly attentive as she could desire. Between them they absorbed all the conversation. Mr. Granger seemed lost in a dream, and Annie, leaning back in the carriage, was very quiet and still, hiding her growing uneasiness.

They left the carriages at the foot of the hill, and clambered up the narrow path. It was a good opportunity for the exercise of pretty feminine arts, and Miss Leighton improved it. It took three, at least, to attend to her wants. Arnold Granger flung her shawl over his arm, carried her parasol, and gravely lent her his arm. One of the Daytons carried an opera-glass and scarf, and then she turned with a coquettish smile to Amyas Ayre, and showed pencils and card-board, which were to be entrusted to him.

"Do you always go thus fully equipped, Cousin Barbara?" asked Victor, with a roguish smile. "You remind me of Queen Bess, with her devoted train of cavaliers."

"I hope Sir Walter Raleigh is among them, then," laughed Barbara, as she stood a moment irresolutely before a pool of water.

Amyas Ayre, with a mocking smile hovering over his lips, which Miss Leighton did not perceive, flung down his cloak.

"Pass on, your majesty," said he.

"Well done! that is like a poet or an artist. Such gallantry would never have suggested itself to my dull mind," observed Arnold.

Miss Leighton's lip curled.

"No one would ever think of expecting it from you," said she, with a trifle of spitefulness in her tone. "You are one of the most matter-of-fact, least romantic persons I ever met, Arnold Granger."

"I suppose so," answered he, with a slight sigh.

Barbara had released his arm. She crossed over to the artist's side and began expatiating on the woodland beauties around them, and playfully coaxing for a sketch from him. Annie Haldeman glanced towards the pair, and quietly accepted Ned Weston's proffered assistance.

When the glorious height was gained, even the dullest eye there acknowledged that the toilsome ascent was more than rewarded. They sat a long while, admiring the lovely scene outspread below and before them, and then strolled away in groups, or in pairs, as inclination prompted.

Arnold Granger was not sorry for the opportunity to enjoy the scene in solitude. He went a little way into the shady grove, feasted his eyes, and then stretched himself upon a bed of dry moss, among the bushes, with his face upturned to the sky. Grave, wearisome thoughts came across him. He sighed heavily, and twice lifted his hand and drew it across his forehead, with a gesture of childish grief and impatience. But presently he closed his eyes, and remained perfectly quiet. He was disturbed, at last, however, by low, earnest tones.

"Oh, Mr. Ayre," said Barbara Leighton's voice, "did you think there was no pain for anyone else in that parting? You need not tell me! I know you had hard and cruel thoughts of me. Alas! as if, of all others, I did not most need pity and charity!"

"Pardon me, Miss Leighton, I cannot perceive the application of the remark," returned the clear, peculiarly sweet-toned voice of Amyas Ayre. "The wealthy, courted, brilliant Miss Leighton, the betrothed of this gentleman of fortune, needing pity! It is too preposterous!"

"Do you believe wealth to be everything?" demanded she, passionately.

"Nay, I think so little of it that I am content to make my brush supply my simple wants, when I might reach out my hand and grasp a fortune," was the calm reply.

"You might? No one here suspects it," said she, with intense interest in her voice.

"Because I do not wish them to do so."

"And why not? It would certainly be an advantage to you. You would occupy an entirely different position."

"What matter, since I shall never ask for it."

"You may yet change your opinion."

"Of what, Miss Leighton?"

"Of the fortune, and of me also. How coldly and bitterly you speak to me," answered she, querulously.

"I have not forgotten the chilling rebuke which warmer words from me once elicited."

"If you had known how bitterly they stabbed my own heart! But what else could I do? How cruel you can be."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Leighton, I think your words might be transposed. If my judgment be not at fault, someone else was cruel, and not I."

"I was engaged to Arnold Granger. My father, I knew, would overwhelm me with his anger if I broke that engagement. I was scarcely aware how dangerously fascinating your society was becoming until your declaration startled me. In that sudden surprise I acted in a way I believed to be prudent. I spoke bitterly and haughtily, and decreed your departure. If you suffered by it so did I. I only knew my own heart when you were gone. Oh, Amyas Ayre, do not be harsh in your judgment of me! With all other men I have been careless and indifferent; but with you—ask me no more!"

The proud voice was actually broken by a sob. But the artist kept his calmness and said, coldly:

"You are still engaged to this gentleman, Miss Leighton. I congratulate you that he is so worthy. It is easy to read his grand nobility of nature."

"He is like a block of ice. He has no heart. Do you not see his supreme indifference? If I could escape from the engagement I would," returned she, almost angrily.

"Then you do not love him?" questioned Amyas Ayre, in a voice that was almost solemn in its earnestness.

Barbara Leighton hesitated a moment, and then replied, hastily:

"Why do you ask me? It is little you care about it!"

"I beg your pardon; you are greatly mistaken. I am vitally interested in your answer."

"But why? I have the right to ask before I give my answer. Is it because your old love is still strong and true? Answer me that, Amyas Ayre."

"Because my old love is still strong and true," replied he, in a voice which trembled, for the moment, with its fervour.

Was it possible the proud, haughty coquette was weeping! It almost seemed to the listener it was so.

"You make me so happy!" murmured she. "I have tried to school myself to forget you, and I could not. I hardly understood the power you had obtained, until I saw you here again, and felt my heart leap up in passionate joy at sight of you. I will answer you truly, Amyas. I have never loved Arnold Granger. He is wealthy and talented, and my friends insist that I shall marry him; but my heart has ever been untouched."

"Then there is no sin in it, however indirectly, disturb your engagement."

"My father will not object, provided I marry someone with an equal fortune," suggested the lady.

"And you will be troubled by no lingering regrets, no clinging affection for Arnold Granger?"

"None whatever," was the prompt reply.

The face upturned to the sky among the bushes beyond them was suffused with a gay smile, and a flush of wounded pride.

In a moment more the pair passed on out of view, and Arnold Granger rose to his feet.

"Well," muttered he, "I am nicely released from an engagement which hung upon me like an iron fetter. My fair Barbara, I have a new respect for you, for I perceive that you actually possess a heart, which I have hitherto doubted. The spell you cast upon me in that early period of my life was soon dissolved. At length I am free again. But my compassion is strongly moved for this poor youth. I suppose I ought to be thinking of swords and pistols, according to the chivalric code of honour; but I feel very much more like embracing him."

He strolled back to the summit, and found a merry circle gathering around the luncheon-basket.

Annie Haldeman quietly made way for Barbara, when presently her cousin appeared, a green chaplet hanging on her arm, and another crowning the artist's light straw hat; and, as she answered some question of his, looked into Amyas's face with eyes filled with tender reproach.

"What, another!" mentally ejaculated Arnold.

"The fellow must be invincible in gallant arts. If his sister possesses as powerful a spell, I must look to my own safety."

He found opportunity for a little conversation himself with the handsome artist. He followed when Amyas Ayre stole away from the company, and found him standing on the edge of a beetling cliff, one arm thrown around a small tree, looking down into the precipice below with grave, earnest, almost melancholy eyes.

"You choose a rather dangerous spot for meditation," said Arnold, quietly. "One would not care to be stumbling around this place without plenty of sunlight."

His voice evidently startled the youth, for he turned quickly and flushed hotly, though he answered, readily:

"To be sure, there might be more secure footing; but I am fond of such wild places. See what cool shadows lie below, what profound peace and quiet! One may well be tempted to lead a hermit's life who has found the world sorely perplexing and heart-sickening."

"Such ought not to be your experience," began Arnold.

"I have been none too fairly dealt with," interrupted he, hastily; "but let it pass. Do you see marks of centuries past in leaf and flower on yonder rock, which some curious geologist has split in twain? What solemn hints of immeasurable truths science whispers. If the mere alphabet is so grand, what must the full exploration prove? Some future time, I suppose, we shall all know."

Arnold glanced wonderingly at the grave, earnest face, the eyes filled with rapt enthusiasm, and wondered if this could be the nature which poured out its lavish affection at the shallow shrine of Barbara Leighton. Something, an impulse he could never after satisfactorily define, prompted him to say:

"Do you know that I heard your conversation with Barbara Leighton, a little while back? I was lying on the ground there among the bushes."

There was a low exclamation, a quick, violent start, which unloosed the arm clasped around the tree. At the same moment the movement of the foot disturbed the soil, and an avalanche of loose stones, gravel and turf plunged downward, and with it slipped the light form of the artist, over the precipice.

Arnold Granger saw a desperate hand grasp wildly at an out-reaching bush, and with keen anguish beheld it give way, and plunge him down still more swiftly. He shut his eyes in dizzy horror, for a moment, and then dashed around the brow of the cliff and found a practicable descent. He tumbled over stones, and tore through clinging brambles, and at last reached the bottom.

The artist had fortunately landed on a soft bed of turf, but he was lying still, with closed eyes and white cheeks. Arnold hurried towards him, and anxiously examined his pulse, thankful to discover that no bones were broken. He looked around for water, and was greatly rejoiced to find a little pool collected in the hollow of a gray rock. He carried both palms full, and dashed the tiny shower over the stiff face.

His efforts were at length successful; there came a deep sigh, a gasping for breath.

But before consciousness returned Arnold Granger rushed away in the most extraordinary manner, muttering as he went:

"Of all strange events, this is the most mysterious! I seem destined to discover all this young man's secrets. Whatever in the world should make him wear a false moustache?"

Amyas Ayre was sitting up, looking around him bewilderedly, when Arnold again appeared, shouting, as he came:

"Mr. Ayre! Mr. Ayre! are you badly hurt?"

"Only stunned, and bruised, I believe," answered the artist, with one hand over his mouth. "If I had a little water—"

"I'll see what can be done," said Arnold, cheerily, and took care to be long enough upon the errand.

When he returned the artist was looking up the rocky height, not without shuddering, his cheek deadly pale; but the moustache was restored to its proper position above his finely cut lips.

"You have had a narrow escape," said Arnold, gravely. "I cannot tell you my unutterable relief at finding you safe, since I felt myself in a measure the cause of the mishap. I startled you too abruptly."

"I thought I should be killed," said he, in a very low voice, "and there were so many strange, bewildering emotions rushing upon me in that brief instant of time that I cannot think calmly yet."

"Did you wait a farewell to Barbara Leighton?" queried Arnold, with a malicious gleam in his eye.

"I cannot just yet," returned he, reproachfully; "but my spirit did breathe a frantic adieu."

"To your sister, probably. It is a mystery to me that thinking of her has not cured you of the foolish infatuation for Barbara Leighton. However, that is

none of my affair, and this much certainly is, I freely confess that you by no means gain my enmity when you break the engagement which has nominally existed for the last five years between Miss Leighton and myself."

"I did not try to break it," said he, sitting down wearily upon the ground, and half covering his face with his hands. "If you heard the whole conversation you must have discovered that."

"But you acknowledged that your old love still filled your heart."

Amyas Ayre was silent for a few moments, and then he spoke, sharply and bitterly:

"Perhaps it would have been better for me if I had never breathed again after that fall."

"Nay, why is not the path fair and prosperous before you? I certainly believe you have won all the affection of which Barbara Leighton is capable. Be happy, lad, if you love her."

The artist rose to his feet, and looked around him, wistfully murmuring:

"I wish I were safely at home. I feel more and more hurt."

At that moment a loud halloo sounded from above them.

"The signal for retreat," exclaimed Arnold; "let me help you."

His voice echoed clear and musical against the rugged wall, and he waited for the return shout before he prepared to leave the spot. It came speedily. Then he turned and offered his arm to his still pale and drooping companion. The latter shook his head with a feeble smile, picked up a stout limb fallen from one of the trees above, and essayed to walk alone by its help.

He was compelled, however, to pause, with quivering lips, and shaking limbs; whereupon Arnold Granger, without an apologetic word, put his strong arm around his waist and led him with an air of grave authority that was by no means unbecoming.

With a woman's patience and gentleness, he paused to rest every now and then; twice procured water, and brought it in a little silver comit-box, of which he bethought himself, to moisten his pale lips. And at length they were safely at the base, where the carriages were waiting.

The rest of the party were watching anxiously for their appearance, already in their seats.

"What has detained you?" called out Victor Haldeman. "Rosebud was just suggesting that somebody should turn back to look for you. If it had only been a lady and gentleman, love-loitering, it might have been excused. But, Amyas, my dear fellow—Good heavens, you are hurt!"

"Nothing serious, thank you," returned the artist, trying his best to smile cheerfully. "I am a little bruised from a fall."

There was a little excitement among the ladies, as they hastily alighted and came towards him.

Amyas Ayre's hand tightened its grasp upon his supporter's arm, and he whispered faintly, although in a passionate tone:

"Take me home—oh, get me home, as quickly as possible! I am faint, and would rather die than lose my consciousness here!"

Arnold Granger was always prompt in action.

"Dayton," said he, coolly, "if you and Miss Rose will not mind riding in the coach I should like to take your chaise and get Mr. Ayre home before his bruises become painful."

And while he spoke he assisted the youth into the chaise, coolly unfastened the horse, leaped in, and was driving off, but suddenly Barbara Leighton stepped forward, almost within reach of the pawing feet of the mettlesome animal.

"Stop," cried she, in an imperious voice. "I must speak a moment with Mr. Ayre. I am sure it is a more serious hurt than you have told us."

Her cheek was deadly pale, her eye somewhat wild. She was evidently extremely alarmed, and coming to the side of the chaise she leaned in, and seized the delicate, supple hand falling listlessly against the cushion.

"Amyas, you are dangerously hurt, and you are trying to hide it," cried she, totally regardless of Arnold's penetrating eye. Tell the truth to me, I beseech you."

"On the contrary, if we are allowed to proceed I am in hopes we shall find that there is nothing worse than a bruise," answered Arnold, seeing that the artist could not reply. "I shall return with the latest bulletin, Barbara. So set your sympathizing heart at rest."

There was no opportunity for her to reply, for Arnold gathered up the reins to curb the restive horse. Amyas Ayre flung her a feeble gesture of adieu, and the chaise drove off.

"Well, Sir Artist, it is very certain that woman loves you," observed Barbara Leighton's betrothed, with a dry laugh. "If I had doubted it before I should be convinced now by that look on her face."

Well, I am pleased to discover that she actually possesses a heart, and since you have acknowledged that you still maintain your affection for her I see nothing to prevent a happy consummation."

Amyas Ayre drew a long, shivering sigh.

"One circumstance only adds to my embarrassment," he said.

"You refer to Miss Haldeman?" replied Arnold.

He roused himself enough to face the speaker, and demanded, almost indignantly:

"What do you mean? What has Annie Haldeman to do with me?"

"I fancied her partiality was known to you. She is so innocent that one can read her emotions as through a glass."

"Better, far better that I had been killed," groaned Amyas Ayre, with a wild grief bursting forth through the quivering voice, which touched the listener's heart keenly.

"My friend," said Arnold, "if help of mine can be of any use to you, I shall gladly give it. Do not forget that, I beg of you."

It seemed to him somewhat ungracious that no reply came, but the young artist leaned back wearily, closed his eyes, and never spoke again until they reached the cottage by the river, then a low and fervent expression of thanksgiving escaped him.

Arnold fairly lifted him out, but before he could reach the door Sheba came rushing forth, her great black eyes rolling, her arms outstretched.

"Mr. Amyas! something terrible has happened!" exclaimed she, in the extremity of her alarm.

"I have had a fall, Sheba."

"The Lord save us! and Miss Amy has stepped out to find a wood flower for the painting."

As she spoke, Sheba unceremoniously dislodged Arnold's hands, and took him into her own strong arms.

"I will go for a physician," said Arnold.

"No. You are very kind, but Sheba is all the doctor I need. Thank you for your goodness," faltered the youth, and he was borne away into the house, rather than assisted, by the giantsess.

Arnold Granger, scarcely knowing whether to be angry or amused, leaped into the chaise, and drove back to Ingleside.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

SODA WATER.—Previously was the first who impregnated water with carbonic acid gas. This was about the year 1767, or one hundred years ago. He found that fixed air could be liberated from chalk or marble by the action of oil of vitriol, and he contrived apparatus for impregnating water with its own weight of gas, and thus manufactured the first soda water ever used. He ventured to recommend the use of gas, as a beverage, which produced the most deadly effects when breathed into the lungs. A gas which is deleterious to inhale is healthful and grateful when received into the stomach. This is a curious physiological fact.

DISEASE OF THE EYE.—The cornea covering the eye in front is apt, from various causes, to have white opaque spots upon it. These spots, if neglected, will spread and intercept the vision, in some cases to the extent of total blindness. As a new remedy, Dr. De Luca, of Paris, has tried the sulphate of soda reduced to a very fine powder. The patient's head was kept in a horizontal posture, while a pinch of the powder was cast upon the eyeball, so that the salt was dissolved by the liquids of the organ itself. This was found to answer; patients who could not see at all before the application of the sulphate were enabled, after a few days' repeated use of it, to distinguish objects vaguely, and were eventually cured completely after a certain time.

THE NATURAL COLOURS OF FIBROUS MATERIAL.—Although Nankin cotton was for many years a favourite material for thin goods, and the woven fabric was quite popular not only for its endurance but for its colour, many people then and many now suppose the yellow tint of the cloth to be given by the art of the dyer. This is not so. The deep yellow, or rather the faint orange tint of the Nankin cotton is inherent in the natural product, and the art of the dyer has nothing to do with it. This cotton is of the variety known to botanists as the *Gossypium arboreum*, or tree-cotton, and is supposed to have originated in Persia. The fibre is remarkable for its length, strength, silkiness, and yellowish tinge. It grows luxuriantly in some parts of India and China, from the latter of which our importations of Nankin cotton were originally made. The colour is generally considered to be due not to the climate but to the constituents of the soil, which must contain ferruginous oxides to give it the orange shade. Its length of

fibre and strength, however, are due mainly to its species, as no upland or herbaceous variety ever equals it in this respect. The last generation was very partial to the Nankin cotton.

CURIOSITIES OF IRON.

In some marked respects iron differs from all other metals. If it were as scarce as gold and silver there is no doubt it would be deemed much more valuable than either, not only for its usefulness but because of its singular qualities. While gold, silver, copper, and other metals are softened by heating and sudden immersion in cold water, the effect of this process on iron is directly the reverse. Although its grain is coarse compared with that of the metals just mentioned, it will receive and retain a fine edge impossible to be induced upon them. It can be changed from a brittle, impure mass without tenacity to a substance so tough, ductile, malleable, and elastic as to be quite unapproachable in these respects; or it can be made into steel as brittle as glass while as elastic as it is possible to conceive of any metallic substance.

While cast iron is one of the most brittle substances known, yet the manipulations of the puddler, aided by fire and oxygen, readily change it to the toughest and most fibrous material. Yet even as cast iron it possesses much elasticity. A large steam cylinder if allowed to rest upon its side will sink by its own weight, so that if five or six feet in diameter it will be depressed from top to bottom of its diameter over an inch. Wire drawn from iron is worked just as wax would be by the moving of the outside particles over the inner as it passes through the dies; yet this process makes it almost as hard and compact as steel.

PRODUCT OF A FLEECE OF WOOL.—The product in thread or cloth from a fleece of wool is something astonishing. At Norwich, many years since, 39,200 yards, or twenty-two and a quarter miles of thread, were spun from a single pound of wool; and sixty years ago a Miss Ives, at Spaulding, spun 68,000 yards or about 95½ miles of woollen thread from a pound of wool off a Lincoln ewe. But this seems nothing to the multiplication a fleece now undergoes at Bradford. From a manufacturer who generally buys by "clip" we have this bit of information. A 20-pound Lincoln fleece, used as an admixture with cotton in the finest Alpaca fabrics, suffices for upwards of twelve "pieces," each piece of 12 yards in length; it might probably be extended to 16 pieces, or a total length of 672 yards, three feet in breadth. At 3s. a yard the sum realized would be 100*l.*; and perhaps the crinolines of 80 or 90 ladies were covered with a single fleece of wool.

MECHANICAL USES OF CASTOR OIL.—It is much better to soften and to redeem old leather with castor oil than any other oil known. When boots and shoes are greased with it the oil will not at all interfere with the polishing afterwards, as is the case with lard, olive, or any other oil. Leather belts for transmitting motion in machinery will usually last three to five years, according to the wear and tear they are exposed to; when greased with castor oil they will last ten years or more, as they always remain flexible and do not crack. Besides this advantage, castor oil will prevent slipping, so that a belt three inches wide, impregnated with it, will be equal to a belt four and a half inches without castor oil. It is necessary, however, to wait twenty-four hours, till the oil has disappeared from the surface and penetrated the leather, otherwise the freshly greased surface will cause slipping. The rats and other vermin detest anything impregnated with castor oil, and will not touch it—another advantage.

MASONRY IN AUSTRIA.—Masonic Lodges have, as is known, been closed in Austria since 1794. An attempt to procure the reopening of them in 1849 failed. The Vicuna Masons are stated to be at present endeavouring to obtain an authorization to reconstitute the former lodge of that city.

KING VICTOR EMMANUEL. with the object of encouraging the breed of horses in Italy, has founded a prize of 40,000 francs, to be run for in 1871 at Florence. For the races of next year his Majesty has given a prize of 15,000 francs. The King's horses may run, but in the event of one of them winning the stakes will be given to the second.

THE MANGO IN MADEIRA.—Mango-trees are now become common in Madeira, and produce fruit abundantly when they have once come into bearing, which is not till they are ten years old or more. The oval or roundish-oval yellow fruit (ripe in September or October) abounds in rich juice like a nectarine, but has always somewhat more or less of a resinous or carrot-like flavour. The flowers are fragrant, like mignonette. The mango is scarcely ever seen in the Canaries, and but rarely in the Cape Verde.



[A CURM FOR LOVE.]

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

THE beach was crowded with visitors. Carriage after carriage dashed across the smooth sands, while their occupants lazily watched the bathers plunging in the water or the numerous promenaders upon the beach.

It was August—nearly noon. The rising tide crept up the sands, but the crowd had not yet begun to disperse.

Down the hill that led to the beach came, slowly, two ladies on horseback. Though there were two of them, it was rare only for one of them to attract more than a passing glance.

Upon Virginia Legare was bestowed the wondering, admiring, and envious looks. They had come to Brighton the day before, but already nearly everyone had discovered who they were—Mrs. Legare and her cousin Miss Randolph, from London.

They rode slowly along through the varied company, Miss Randolph looking with interested eyes over the different groups, while her companion's gaze wandered out upon the water which gleamed in the golden sunlight.

How can I, with mere cold, meagre words, picture to you that woman's face as I first saw it that day? And not her face alone, her figure, her hands, the very horse she sat on, appeared endowed with some powerful enchantment. Her form was slender, every movement full of a supple grace, her quietness suggesting every pose of beauty.

She was dressed very plainly, in a black riding-habit and hat, the latter slightly pushed back from her forehead, as though it made her head too warm.

I believe I took in at the first look all the details of her personal appearance—I saw then, as plainly as afterwards, the contour of her face, the colour of her eyes.

Her forehead was not high, but broad and very largely developed over the brows, where phrenologists say the perceptive faculties lie.

Her arched dark eyebrows were pencilled softly over eyes of deep expression—humid eyes of sweetness, and yet possessing something that betrayed intense power.

It was an ordinary nose, but not an ordinary mouth. The deep crimson of the lips told of such mobile power; such smiles—such curves which only bordered upon a voluptuousness that was more refined than that word usually expresses.

As I saw her face in repose, I felt all that I have said to be true—later I learned its truth by heart.

The hand in which she held the reins was covered with a dark gauntlet; the other, ungloved, white, and ringless, hung by the horse's side.

That snow-white animal pawed daintily, as if knowing the burden he bore.

I did not then notice her companion. I did not even see her.

"Upon my soul, it's rather amusing," said my companion.

Without taking my eyes from the equestrienne, I said:

"I don't in the least understand you."

"Oh, no; of course not," he said, with a laugh, taking his cigar from his mouth as he spoke. "But I referred to the interesting fact that it is impossible for any man to see that woman without intense admiration, as you are so evidently aware."

The words were slightly irritating, but I concealed the annoyance I felt, and replied:

"Then I am only worshipping at a universal shrine?"

"Precisely."

"Well, who is she?"

The two horsewomen had stopped close to a

group of three ladies who had just issued from the bathing-houses, equipped for the water. The lady before mentioned was talking, smiling slightly as she spoke. I was too distant to hear her voice, but I saw the play of her face, the slight gesture she made as she conversed. Many women might have done the same thing—not one could do it as she did.

"She is Mrs. Legare, from London."

"Mrs. Legare!" I said, with an involuntary accent on the title.

"Oh, yes; but don't let that dishearten you. She is a widow. Three years since she married a sprightly fellow of sixty, who was good enough to go off the first year of their marriage, leaving her several hundred thousand pounds with which to purchase mourning. You don't find every man of sixty so accommodating."

The brightness of her presence was already before my eyes, and Shaw's flippant account did not have the effect upon me which it otherwise would.

"What made her marry him?" I asked, innocently, thinking, perhaps, it was a sacrifice to father or mother.

"Bless you!" exclaimed Shaw; "what's the matter with you? Haven't I told you? Money."

"Money for herself or her parents?" I persisted.

"For herself. She had no parents living. She wanted old Legare's fortune and position, and she got them both."

"Do you know her? Are you acquainted with her?" I inquired.

"A little. Of course, I've proposed to her. There never was a man who knew her a month who did not do that, fondly thinking that he was the one whom she could love."

Shaw grinned sardonically, and struck a pebble fiercely with his boot heel.

"You wish me to think that she is a flirt?" I asked, cynically, thinking that this was the reason for my friend's tone as he talked of her.

"I only wish to tell you she is the most beautiful woman at present in society," he replied.

Then, after a moment's pause:

"I don't say that it's her fault that every man she knows, for the first few weeks, always thinks it is for him she smiles—for him that voice murmurs so musically. I expect it's our stupidity, and we suffer for it. Some of us remember her voice so well that all other voices sound tame to us. That's our fault, too. Remember it when you hear her tones."

He turned and walked away, as I commenced to say to him:

"Don't warn me. I shall not hear her speak."

He walked towards the beach, and I went farther on, leaving Mrs. Legare and the company behind me.

The ladies with whom she had been talking had gone down into the water, and she sat looking at them. I lay down within the shadow of a rock, my hat drawn over my eyes, lazily thinking of all that my friend had been telling me.

After a few moments I heard the sound of horses' hoofs on the damp sand. Almost immediately they were opposite me, and I heard an exclamation of alarm in a woman's voice.

I sprang to my feet, and saw Mrs. Legare's horse shy and rear violently. I do not know but my own motionless figure might have frightened him; it was evident that something had done so.

The animal was but a yard or two from me, and the next moment I had grasped him by the bridle, and he was pulling and stamping impatiently.

I glanced up at the lady, and her colourless face, pale from weakness, not fear, I fancied, alarmed me so greatly that I feared she would fall from the saddle. Upon the impulse of the instant I stepped to her side, still holding the bridle in one hand, and held up my arm, saying:

"Let me assist you."

She slipped from the saddle, resting for one brief second upon my arm; in that fleeting space of time I felt the breath from her parted, but now pale lips—the throb of her heart as it beat quickly and heavily.

She sat down on the sand, and Miss Randolph, jumping with agility from her horse, hastened to her side.

"You are ill, Margaret," she said, anxiously, kneeling by her cousin.

As soon as she spoke I knew it was Miss Randolph, not Mrs. Legare, who had uttered the exclamation of fear.

"Slightly so," was the low reply, "or I should not have allowed the horse to conquer me thus. It is not good for him."

I did not wonder that Shaw, that all who had heard it, remembered that voice.

It was like nothing I had ever heard.

I can but explain it by writing that it suggested beauty of an indescribable kind—that vague, sentient beauty felt on summer evenings, of languid flower-odours, of bright moons reposing in purple skies—of

a life through which should pulsate a soft, thrilling, epicurean happiness.

The horse was still angry and impatient, and I stood holding him, furtively watching the two ladies, or rather Mrs. Legare alone, for I only saw that her cousin was dark, that she had an expression of pride and self-reliance. Miss Randolph noticed my anxious look and said:

"It is only a temporary weakness to which she is subject."

"And which is extremely humiliating to me," interposed Mrs. Legare, rising slowly as she spoke. "I think I will mount now. I shall be entirely restored in a moment."

The manner in which she spoke precluded the possibility of objecting, low and musical though the words were.

She put her foot in my hand and sprang into the saddle, the colour coming to her cheeks as she gathered up the reins.

When I had assisted Miss Randolph, Mrs. Legare turned for the first time towards me. She leaned down and held out her hand with that charming, frank grace which is so rare.

Beneath her eyes, beneath the strange seductive beauty of that smile, I felt my heart beating with a new ecstasy composed of both hope and pain. Instead of thanking me, she said:

"You will tell me your name?"

"Carl Rudolph."

"You have confirmed a suspicion of mine."

She had withdrawn her hand, and was resting it on the pommel, looking down at me, smilingly.

"And what was that?" I asked.

"I thought you were German."

"You were right. I was born in Germany, but almost all my life has been spent here. I feel like an Englishman."

"And are you not a musician?" she asked, with an appearance of interest that had its effect upon me.

"I am."

"Ah, then you are Rudolph the pianist!" she exclaimed, still in that sweet, intoxicatingly sweet voice.

"You have guessed rightly," I replied, unconsciously, feeling in her tone and manner a subtle flattery—a draught that I drank unwittingly.

"Then, perhaps you will permit me to be still more grateful than your service this morning has made me?" she said, interrogatively.

"You may command me," I said, eagerly.

"Nay—I ask a favour. You will call and play to me?"

"It will give me pleasure to do so," I replied.

"Come to the hotel and ask for Mrs. Legare."

She bowed, I lifted my hat, and the two rode away.

Miss Randolph had listened intently to our talk—did I fancy, or did I really see upon her face, as she turned her horse, a smile of amusement, not unmingled with contempt? I certainly thought I saw such a look, and it recalled, with a feeling of resentment, all that Shaw had said.

"It is false!" I said to myself. "That woman must be jealous of the attention Mrs. Legare receives."

And yet I had to acknowledge that Miss Randolph did not look as if she were subject to such narrow-minded and unworthy thoughts. Foolishly, irritatingly, that look lingered with me. I thought of it with all my thoughts of the fascinating woman to whom I had rendered that trifling service. But when I again saw her every hope and thought except that connected with herself melted into nothing.

The next evening I was sauntering slowly along on my way to the hotel to call upon her, when suddenly Shaw left a knot of men at the corner of the street, and came and put his arm in mine.

"Do you want to know what those friends of mine were saying?" he asked, looking gravely at me.

"Not particularly," I responded, beginning immediately to feel angry.

"It concerns you," he said, with malicious good-nature. "They were discussing the little interview you had with Mrs. Legare, yesterday, on the beach. It is well known that, for the last fortnight, a certain planter from the island of Cuba has been most favoured. Well, they were betting champagne suppers that you would supplant him. Some are for the Cuban, but the majority are for you. Flattering, is it not? But you have such a superior look with your curly hair and beard."

"Fshaw! nonsense!" I said. "Why are you always annoying me, Shaw?"

"Let me cease my jesting," he said, with sudden seriousness. "It won't do any good to warn you, but listen, Carl—I never spoke more earnestly in my life. You are already half infatuated with that woman—and you are such a strongly-in-earnest fellow. I tell you that she cannot love—that she will

lure you to your ruin—she will draw from you little by little all your purest hopes, your secret aspirations, the most dear and hidden of your thoughts—then she will wind herself into your soul. Then you will awake—you will struggle to believe she is not false—and afterwards you will believe all women as untrue, as heartless as she."

We had reached the hotel, and stopped at its steps.

"I know your good intention in thus speaking," I said, half shivering, as if a cold wind had struck me, "but I am not in love with Mrs. Legare, neither has she marked me out for a victim. It is the sheerest folly on your part to imagine so."

As I ceased speaking I saw approaching along the hall Mrs. Legare and a dark, handsome, swarthy man, who was talking earnestly to her.

They went into the parlour without seeing us. Shaw looked at them but did not speak, and walked away, leaving me alone.

Shall I confess to experiencing an emotion of jealous anger as I saw them?

I had begun my career of folly, and I may as well tell everything. I was shown into the parlour and greeted with cordiality, and a friendliness that soothed my irritated nerves. Mrs. Legare was sitting by herself on a sofa, the Cuban was standing at a window near her.

At the end of the long room were several ladies and gentlemen whom I did not notice. She rose and came forward—touched my hand with her warm, soft fingers—said some trifling word that from her lips had a charm and a grace.

It was curious how soon I felt at home with her; that is, so far as outward appearances went. I was conscious of a power of conversation, of repartee, of appreciation, that I had never felt in the society of another.

She turned to her companion, and said: "Mr. Castello, you will be pleased to know Carl Rudolph. You were speaking of him the other night."

Castello, notwithstanding her words, did not appear particularly pleased to see me. He looked at me with gloomy eyes, and bowed very slightly indeed, stood a moment, uttered some commonplace remark, then walked away, leaving me virtually alone with Mrs. Legare. One glance from her eyes, one smile from her lips, had driven away all that Shaw had been saying.

There is nothing I can tell about that evening—nothing of that woman's charm can be shaped into words. But hitherto I had not cared for ladies' society—now, for the first time, I was bewildered and enchanted.

I played two little simple pieces to her. I played with all the fervour the music and her presence inspired in me. She sat near the piano, her head resting on her hand, her eyes shaded.

Her expressive lips grew sadder and sweeter as I played, and when I had finished she remained motionless for a moment, then looked up with tears swimming in her eyes, and said, in a low tone:

"You have done what no music has ever done for me before; you have brought back, for one moment, the innocence of my childhood."

That was all she said about my playing; but nothing I had ever heard affected me as those few words did. The delight, the intoxication that thrilled through my veins was as new as it was all powerful.

I had stayed as long as I dared, had already trespassed upon the limits of a first call, and I rose to go. While bidding farewell to Mrs. Legare I happened to see, standing at a table not far off, a figure which I recognized as Miss Randolph's.

She was looking at me with a serious, penetrating gaze that seemed to read my very soul. She dropped her eyes instantly, and moved away, and I forgot her look after the first surprise it gave me.

I will not attempt to describe the days that followed—only from a few will I transcribe the burning characters they wrote upon my life.

If I did not love Mrs. Legare, I felt for her something which I thought was love, though it had no rest nor peace in it.

In her presence I was like a man overpowered with rare wine; when away from her I knew all the torments of doubt, jealousy, hope and despair. The eyes that gave me happiness did not give me the foundation of happiness—trust.

I had spoken no words of love, but she was not one to mistake my face, my very apparent devotion. It was already the first of September, but she still remained at Brighton, and I had sacrificed several offers of engagement to remain alone.

Castello had been gone a fortnight, to my great relief, and apparently not to Mrs. Legare's sorrow. My childish ideas of Spaniards and Cubans were revived by him, and sometimes I was even weak enough to shudder when I met his glance, there was such deadly vindictiveness in his eyes.

A new moon was sinking in the pure amethysts of the sky, and from across the sea breathed that mild, sweet breath which has made the air of Brighton so celebrated.

I was walking on the beach with Mrs. Legare, too vividly conscious that her hand touched my arm, that the fragrance of her breath was in the air. Try as hard as I might, I knew that I could not long restrain the passionate declaration that was throbbing in my breast for utterance.

A silence inexpressibly sweet had fallen upon me. I did not care to break it, and she walked by my side with downcast eyes, and over her face was spread a veil of voluptuous sadness that made her look like a dream of Eastern beauty.

The subdued roll of a carriage sounded behind us, the next moment it had stopped, and two ladies, leaning forward to greet Mrs. Legare, exclaimed with delight at their good fortune in finding her.

A violent expletive rose to my lips, but fortunately I did not utter it.

"They had been looking all the evening for Mrs. Legare—and now indeed she must come with them, to go to Mr. Yates's country seat. This gentleman would excuse her?"

I bowed my acquiescence.

Mrs. Legare hesitated a moment, glanced at me, and said, in an undertone:

"You see I cannot well refuse; besides, I had promised to go with them some time. Good-night."

"Good-night. May I see you to-morrow?" One glance from her eyes that left me wretched at her absence, and she had entered the carriage and was driven away.

I turned and walked leisurely back towards the road. Half way there I met Miss Randolph, walking alone.

She bowed to me, and seemed to half hesitate, as if she would speak, but she went on. The next moment, however, a voice at my side said, in low tones:

"Mr. Rudolph, can you give me a few moments' interview?"

I turned in surprise, and saw that it was Miss Randolph, who had come back and thus addressed me.

"Certainly," I said, with a very astonished face.

And we walked along together.

She was looking towards the water, evidently troubled and embarrassed as to the manner in which she should address me. At last she said:

"It is so delicate a subject upon which I wish to speak that I am at a loss what to say. However, I will speak plainly, for I am persuaded it is my duty to do so. Were you like the other admirers who have fluttered about my cousin I should not care to do so. Neither their lives nor their hearts are permanently affected."

A moment's pause, then she looked at me, and said:

"You are deeply interested in Mrs. Legare?"

"I am," I replied, without thinking of equivocating or evading.

There was something too truthful in this girl's face and manner to permit a doubt of her sincerity or to allow of deceiving her in the least.

"I cannot explain," she said, rapidly. "If I could, I need not make use of so many words. Is it asking too much of you to listen to me when I say that Mrs. Legare is deceiving you, as she is deceiving others?"

I paused in my walk, and she stopped also. In that dusky light we looked at each other an instant.

"Do you know what Mrs. Legare's power over a man may be?" I asked, with sudden impulse.

"I have known my cousin for ten years," she replied. "If observation can tell me anything I know."

There was a long silence.

"Observation is not experience," I finally said.

"Miss Randolph, I love your cousin. I shall ask her to be my wife."

She looked as if she had expected this, though she might have hoped differently.

"Whatever happens," she said, "you will know that I have spoken in all kindness and sincerity of purpose."

She walked hurriedly away, leaving me terribly depressed and unhappy. Shaw's conversation, earnest though it had been, had not affected me as this had done. I was chilled and desponding; but every thought of Mrs. Legare, every memory of her, flamed through my frame with all the power of the despotic passion she had inspired. An insane man might as well have been warned as me.

I wandered beneath the kindly moon-beams until almost midnight. The night was more soothing and friendly than anything else.

On my way to my room I went by the hotel where Mrs. Legare was stopping. Music stole through the open windows, and I saw the figures

of the guests floating through the measures of a wait.

I walked up the approach without thinking whether I should enter or not. As I reached the terrace I saw at the end of it, where it ran along the side of the house, in the deep shadow of trees and shrubbery, a figure leaning over the railing. Without seeing her distinctly enough to know, still I was sure that it was Mrs. Legare, and I walked directly to her side.

She greeted me without any surprise. There was an air of languor, of regret about her that hastened the words I said. I held her hand in mine, I pressed it to the wild pulsations of my heart; with vehement utterance I poured forth all the intense feeling of my life.

I do not know what I said—my words fell like fire from my lips. I looked at her with entreating eyes.

Was it a flash of exultation that passed across her face? Whatever it was I thought it was mingled with some sincere feeling.

Blinded as I was, I could not be mistaken in the expression of her eyes as she raised them to my face. They were tender, melting; they gave me liberty to stoop and touch her lips with mine with all the fervour that prompted me to do it. Her forehead drooped until for one blissful instant it touched my shoulder.

I heard, without noticing, a faint clicking sound in the shrubbery near. Mrs. Legare lifted her head quickly, and the next instant I felt a stinging pain.

I grew faint and blind, but not so faint but that I felt the warm touch of Mrs. Legare's arms around my neck, her breath upon my face.

I lay motionless upon the floor of the piazza, my head in Mrs. Legare's lap. I heard, as in a dream, the exclamations of the people who rushed out of the hotel. Then, like the voice of doom, I heard, in Castello's tones:

"Curse him! She is my wife!"

Then I swooned in truth. I thought I fell into an unfathomable well, where there was no light and no hope. I did not know anything, but throughout that long insensibility, and the raging fever that followed it, I seemed always to hear those words:

"She is my wife."

And often I seemed to feel again the touch of her arms and lips, and thought that all but that had been a horrible dream.

When finally I began to grow convalescent my friends hastened to call on me; but I was so morbidly sensitive that I would receive no one.

In those lonely days when I walked feebly to and fro in my room there commenced the slow death of the passion that had grown upon me so suddenly and intensely.

When once I had hopelessly lost my respect for her I could not long be moved at thought of the wonderful charms of face and voice and manner.

I knew and felt that she was false, and, mercifully, all else that she had inspired me with vanished slowly from me.

It was January. I had been out to walk for the first time.

All the fashionables had fled, and I was glad that I encountered no one that I knew.

I was sitting in my lounging-chair, out of breath, but already invigorated, when I heard a voice at the door, saying to the servant:

"Fahaw! I know he'll see me. I'm going in."

And Shaw pushed by the man and came up to me, took my hand with unusual gentleness, and looked with moistened eyes at me.

He sat down, saying:

"You are rather pale, but there's a promise of health in your face."

"I'm getting on bravely," I said, already wishing he'd break the long silence concerning past affairs.

I think he saw the wish expressed in my face, for after a conversation about indifferent matters he asked:

"Do you want to hear any news I can tell you?"

I bowed affirmatively.

"Have you really recovered from your past folly?"

"Whatever I feel," I said, "nothing you can say will harm me, for I despise that woman. I have had time for reflection, and a shock sufficient to set me thinking. I thought her unmarried, when suddenly I was shot by her husband. You can imagine what a different sensation I should have felt had it been a rival lover."

"I think you are safe from a broken heart. For all that, you will be shocked," responded Shaw. "Castello and his wife sailed for Havana a fortnight ago."

Why did he keep pausing?

"Go on," I said, impatiently. "Did the captain fall in love with her?"

"I don't know. The steamer was burned, and all but six were lost!"

My heart gave so violent a bound that for an instant I was almost suffocated. I leaned back helplessly in my chair.

Shaw rose in alarm, handed me a glass of wine, saying:

"I was imprudent. You are weaker than I thought."

"No, no—it is over. I might as well know it now. She was not saved?"

"She died—she and her husband," he replied.

After a long pause I said:

"We can forgive the dead, can we not?"

For answer he pressed my hand warmly in both his own.

"It seems to have been only a whim—her old desire for the unobstructed admiration to which she was accustomed, that made her impose secrecy upon her husband for the first few weeks of their marriage. She had been married to Castello but a fortnight when they came here, I believe. He was immensely rich, I heard. You may be sure there was a nice scandal here while you were unconscious of it all."

If it is ten years since then, and I look back with a smile of wonderment at myself; but it was all terribly real to me then.

I again met Miss Randolph. It is she, and she alone whom I have loved. I am happy—I vainly regret nothing; for in the inexhaustible mutual love we bear to each other my wife and I journey on in unspeakable peace and content. C. E.

THE WEB OF FATE.

CHAPTER V.

HOME AGAIN.

MRS. WASHBURN was slightly embarrassed to know how she should speak to Beatrice about her uncle. For his niece had always kept a profound silence when his name was mentioned and discouraged any conversation upon the subject. But to speak she was determined, and the morning after the miniature scene she sat watching her young friend, studying how to begin. Beatrice sat idly at the window, her hands folded in her lap. But her face was not so listless as her attitude. Her eyes looked watchful, and a feverish colour in the cheeks showed excitement.

"Dear me! I do hope she doesn't care about Sidney," thought the lady, uneasily. "I wouldn't for the world have interposed that little Willis, if I had believed that it would hurt Beatrice."

"My dear," she said, aloud, entering upon the subject at once, "how odd that your uncle never tries to see you."

Beatrice started, coloured, and looked with a sharp and searching glance at her companion. Could Mrs. Washburn have found out that she was seeking a reconciliation?

"While your husband was alive one would not have wondered so much," the lady went on, tranquilly, not seeming to notice any unpleasant effect from her speech; "but now in your trouble it is really strange that he does not seek you. One requires relatives at such a time."

"Relatives are not always friends," remarked Beatrice, evasively.

"To be sure. But then you know that he was very fond of you. Everyone remarked it. Mrs. Frank Adams told me that she used to see you at lectures and concerts together, and that he acted as though he couldn't take his eyes off you. And she also said that once, after you were married, she spoke to him about you, and that his lip trembled so much that for a minute he couldn't speak. But when he did so he said that his house felt as though there had been a death in it."

The tears rushed into Beatrice Griffith's eyes, and she involuntarily stretched out her hands with a longing gesture.

Oh, for a tender, protecting love on which she could lean securely! Oh, for someone to whose happiness she was necessary!

"I suppose he thinks that you are quite estranged from him," the widow continued. "He must think so, or he wouldn't try to console himself with that affected Jane Seymour. Poor man! He must be lonely indeed when he turns to her for companionship. She is about as satisfying to an empty heart as ice-cream to an empty stomach. I told Mrs. Frank—who can that be at the door? Can Sidney be up at half-past ten? That would be a wonder. Come in," she said, raising her voice. Then lowering it again, "I should not suppose that anybody expects me to get up and—"

Here she stopped short, for the door had opened and Mr. James Langdon entered. He looked eagerly around, and seeing his niece held out both arms.

"My little Beatrice!" he exclaimed.

The reminiscences of Mrs. Washburn had prepared her to welcome him, and at that moment all cause of bitterness was forgotten. Beatrice ran to meet her uncle, and, throwing her arms about his neck, sobbed on his bosom. At this sudden and glorious realization of her hopes and desires Mrs. Washburn sat for a moment as if transfixed. Then, recollecting herself, she softly withdrew and left the uncle and niece to themselves.

At home once more, after such weary wanderings. Rest once more, after so many struggles. Hope renewed after such great despair. Yet Beatrice could not, or fancied that she could not have explained what she meant by wanderings, struggles, and despair, or why she wept so bitterly. Neither did she know, though perhaps she had a suspicion of it, that the home, the rest, and the hope were never more to be hers, and that what her heart yearned for was that which was past, not what she looked forward to.

But her uncle thought that he understood everything perfectly. Beatrice had been unhappy, had become utterly weary of the Griffiths, had been longing to return to him, and was now crying like a baby for joy. About an hour afterwards Beatrice went in search of Mrs. Washburn.

"You dear child," said that lady, embracing her joyfully. "I never felt so glad in my life."

"Thank you," said Beatrice, without the slightest appearance of enthusiasm. "Won't you come and see Uncle James? He wishes to thank you for your kindness to me."

"Tut, tut! what have I done? But if he fancies me to have been a benefactress, I suppose I must take the consequences. But, Beatrice," she put her two hands on her young friend's shoulders and looked keenly into her face, "you are not happier for this, child. What would you have? I am disappointed."

"Oh! don't let me disappoint anyone else," said Beatrice, with a little laugh that was full of impatient bitterness. "Here is my poor uncle building up a beautiful castle which presently will topple about his ears. He fancies that when I go back to his house I shall be a gay young girl again. When he finds he's mistaken he will be quite out of conceit with me."

She did not repeat what had most effectually chilled her.

Poor, headstrong Mr. Langdon, confident that his surmises were quite true, and unable to learn wisdom by experience, had said, by way of comfort to his niece: "Don't cry, dear; you shall go home with me, and leave the Griffiths altogether. I knew that you would soon be glad to do so."

Mrs. Washburn sighed, but, since some of her plans were in a state of forwardness, smiled and went to receive the gentleman's thanks.

No definite conclusion was arrived at, though Mr. Langdon would gladly have taken his niece home that very day.

"I have business to settle first," she said, quietly. "Besides, perhaps Miss Seymour is not prepared to receive me," smiling a little archly.

"Miss Seymour!" exclaimed the gentleman, drawing himself up. "She has nothing to say about the matter."

"I can't think of sparing Beatrice yet," interposed Mrs. Washburn. "I shall be so desolate. You must let her stay a week at least. You know you can come to see her every day."

Mr. Langdon consented, gallantly hoping that Mrs. Washburn would comfort herself in like manner by frequently visiting his niece when she was at home.

"But can I not transact your business for you?" he asked, when Beatrice went to the door with him.

"What is it?"

"What my husband left me is in his brother's care," she said, "and I can best attend to that, thank you."

"Supposing he should try to cheat you?" said her uncle. "He's likely to be angry with you for returning home and taking your money out of his hands."

Beatrice Griffith drew herself up haughtily.

"I never heard Mr. Sidney Griffith accused of theft," she said. "And so far from profiting by the change, I know that I have been a trouble, if not an expense to him. Besides, instead of being angry with me for going home, he strongly advised me to do so."

"He did!" said her uncle, suspiciously. "Are you going to marry that man, Beatrice?"

"Uncle James, let there be an end of this!" she exclaimed, decisively. "If we are to be friends, there must be no more of this nonsense. Mr. Griffith is my husband's brother, and as such is entitled to my respect. I do not wish to hear him spoken of as 'that man.' He is a gentleman, and acknowledged to be so. As to marriage, if it will give you any satisfaction let me tell you that it is most probable that he will marry Miss Margaret Willis."

Any anger which Mr. Langdon might have felt at the first part of the speech was quite lost in this last blow. He lowered his head and turned hastily away.

"Well, well, Beatrice, we won't say anything about him," he said. "Don't forget that you and Mrs. Washburn are to come to dinner to-morrow. Good-bye!"

Mrs. Washburn laughed to herself, overhearing this last charge. Apart from her satisfaction at the general state of things, she was highly delighted and amused at the idea of a meeting with Miss Seymour. She had an old grudge against that lady, for in her young days Miss Seymour had been a belle, and had had also a prospect of wealth, and when Mrs. Washburn, no longer so young as she might have been, and still a miss, had not felt sure of her "poor, dear Washburn," the younger lady had given her some severe jealous quills. Now they were again opposed, and Mrs. Washburn laughed within herself at the idea of a new dispute on the same question. To her sense of humour it was decidedly comical.

"Mrs. Washburn, what are you laughing about?" asked Mrs. Griffith.

The lady gave a very merry laugh.

"I am thinking of Miss Jane Seymour's sensations under the new régime," she said. "I must tell Sidney."

"But don't say anything to him about it now," said Beatrice. "Uncle is so opposed to him, and I am not prepared to smooth matters at present."

Mrs. Griffith had resolved to tell her brother-in-law nothing till she knew the result of her message to her uncle. Besides, she had seen but little of him during the last week. Margaret Willis had been with them continually. At first the heiress had been very gracious with Mr. Griffith, but, noticing a glance from Beatrice, had grown suspicious and watchful. The day of Mr. Langdon's call she did not come, and our three friends dined together untroubled.

"Come to my room, ladies," Mr. Griffith said, when they arose from the table. He remembered that Mrs. Washburn had left a visitor waiting, and resolved to know the meaning of his sister-in-law's languid eyes, for he plainly saw the traces of tears. "I am utterly out of tune, and need your harmonizing influence. I am fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils. Come, in mercy to my possible victim, if not to myself."

"Beatrice can go," Mrs. Washburn said. "Mrs. Rathbone is waiting for me."

"Will Beatrice be such an angel?" he said, hesitatingly.

"Beatrice will be exactly such an angel," she laughed, taking his arm.

When they reached his apartment Sidney Griffith closed the door behind them, then turned and took both his companion's hands in his.

"What is my sister angry with me for?" he asked, softly, dropping his steady eyes on hers.

The question and his manner of asking it were so sudden and unexpected that Beatrice blushed crimson, and could not speak a word.

"Do you imagine that I did not perceive that something was wrong?" he asked, in the same low, thrilling voice. "Do you imagine that your face could cloud towards me, Beatrice, and I not darken?"

She tore her hands from him in a sort of rage, and turned away.

"Ever thus, Beatrice and sister, but his air that of a lover!"

What did he mean? A pang of doubt wrung her heart so severely that she could have cried out. If he were unworthy! If he were trifling with her! But the thought no sooner entered her mind than it was as speedily lost in a feeling of shame and self-reproach. Ever kind and tender as he had been, how could she wrong him so? She placed her hands in his again, and lifted a smiling though tearful face.

"I have been so anxious that you must forgive me if I seemed ill-natured," she said.

"You were anxious, dear, about what?" he asked, holding her soft hands against his bosom.

"Oh, many things. But all is settled now." A flash of light darted into his eyes. "Uncle has been here to-day," she said, looking into his face intently.

She saw that it grew a little paler, and her heart gave a bound.

"Well?" he said again, breathlessly.

"I don't know of anything else," she said, turning away, "except that he may offer to pay you a bill for damages for the wear and tear of patience incident on taking charge of so troublesome a person."

"He will welcome me to visit you at his house?" asked the gentleman.

"Of course you never expected that," was the somewhat cold reply.

"Do you really think that he is as crazy on this subject as ever?"

"Certainly. Such a man does not easily give up such a prejudice."

"And will you submit to this?" he asked, indignantly.

Beatrice shrugged her white shoulders.

"I have no choice left me."

He walked slowly up and down the room, sighing heavily.

"I ought to be glad for you; but I can only think of my loss," he said, sadly. "What am I to do?"

"Miss Willis will amuse you," said Beatrice, sweetly.

He came and stood behind her chair, leaning on the back of it, and smothering her hair with a tender hand.

"I would like to speak to you about this [Miss Willis]," he said. "You know Mrs. Washburn wants me to marry her, if she will have me, which I am not vain enough to be sure of. I would like to know what you think about it, Beatrice. Of course, I need not tell you that love is quite out of the question. Neither can I conceal from you that in many things she offends my tastes. But you know my circumstances, or partially so. I need a fortune. I could not marry a poor woman even if I loved her as well as I love you, darling. If I marry at all, I must put my heart aside and listen to necessity. It is doubtful if I could make up my mind to marry so. But if I could—if I should feel the absolute necessity for it—would you advise me to marry this girl?"

"If you wish to marry for money," said Beatrice, quietly; "I think that you could not do better than to marry Miss Willis. I think you might be able to bear with her. She is not hideous, and she is not a simpton. If you were to break her heart I think her manners would get suitably toned down. But the question on my mind is whether it would be treating her rightly. Would you propose telling her that you desired to marry her solely for her fortune, her person being disagreeable to you?"

"It is highly probable that I should do so," the gentleman answered, deeply annoyed and entirely disappointed by the reception his avowal met with.

"Would you tell her that you love her?" questioned Beatrice again, in a cold and steady voice.

"You are merciless, but you are right," he exclaimed. "I was thinking of my necessities and not of her. I never thought of what I must say to her. I renounce the scheme therefore. I thank you for guiding me away from this miserable folly, dear."

"Oh, decide for yourself," she said, rising. "I would not take any responsibility in the matter. I didn't mean to influence you. I was only asking for information. It really seems to me that if you marry her you must be insincere or she more humble and devoted than I think she is capable of being. Good-bye; I am going to see Mrs. Rathbone."

And, shaking out her flowing skirts, Mrs. Griffith sailed from the room. She found Mrs. Rathbone gone, but Miss Willis was with Mrs. Washburn.

"Wonders will never cease," cried that young lady. "Are my eyes starting out of my head? They feel as though they were. As I was coming down the street who should I meet but your uncle! He stopped me, and after a little chat asked me to come to his house to-morrow to dinner, to meet you two ladies. He spoke of 'my niece, Beatrice,' as though every thing were quite a matter of course, and I had been in the habit of meeting you at his house from time immemorial, instead of not daring hitherto to mention your name when he was within a mile. I looked at him with astonishment, but did not dare to ask any explanation, for there was that tattling Mrs. Kirby at my elbow. I could only accept the invitation and rush in here to ask what it meant. And so you are really going back to make it all up? Won't Miss Seymour be annoyed?"

"Poor Miss Seymour!" laughed Beatrice. "I begin to pity her. She has to take annoyances from every side. But I mean that Miss Seymour and I shall be the best of friends."

"I'd like to be behind the door and see her face when she hears all this fine arrangement," said the girl, in high glee. "But I should be afraid to see her heart when she has to smile and welcome us to-morrow. I tell you there will be murder in her heart!"

There was no murder in Miss Seymour's heart; but there was a vast amount of spite and bitter disappointment. Had she been bold, wilful, and cruel, there might have been murder, but Miss Seymour's faults were petty, and injured herself chiefly.

One person in the house was purely and unaffectedly glad, however, and that one was Charles Blake. He was so glad indeed that he was astonished at himself.

As the time drew near for the ladies to arrive, Mr. Langdon having gone to escort them, he began to tremble with eager expectation, almost with fear. When they stepped from the carriage at length, and Beatrice came with a bright colour up the steps, he

was obliged to leave the parlour for a moment, feeling that he could not meet her then.

The sight of that graceful form and lovely face, realizing the ideal he had formed of her, exceeding the ideal with such a wealth of colour, and sweetness, and brightness, was almost too much for him.

Beatrice stepped inside the door, but before greeting Miss Seymour, who was advancing with extended hands and a smile of welcome, she turned, and, putting her arms around her uncle's neck, kissed him tearfully.

"Welcome home, my dear child!" he said, tenderly, though not able quite to forget the arch look which Miss Willis had given him as she saw the approach of the housekeeper.

Miss Seymour, indeed, acted her part well, and we must give her credit for an extraordinary degree of fortitude on this occasion. It could not have been an agreeable sight, those three ladies who came smiling and confident, walking into her conquered city, and crushing all her hopes.

Two of the ladies met her with a patronizing air, which ill concealed the malicious amusement they really felt; but Beatrice greeted her with sincere cordiality, then gave her hand to Charles Blake, who had taken courage at last and now made his appearance.

"I suppose we are some sort of cousins, if we only know it now," she said, with a smile that dazzled him, a deep blush overspreading his face.

He hated himself because he could only blush and stammer out some awkward reply, thinking that she must deem him ridiculous. He would have been comforted, however, could he have known the lady's mental comment on him:

"I know that he is genuine and good," she thought. "None but a good man blushes. I shall like him. Ah, well!"

"How oft we are constrained to appear, With other countenance than that we owe, And be ourselves far off, when we are near."

Poor Blake's trouble about his blushes was the least that hid itself in that room beneath smiles. One could not fancy either Mrs. Griffith or Miss Seymour to have been in a state of absolute beauty; Mr. Langdon was shivering and smarting by turns, between the news given him a week before by his niece regarding Miss Willis, and that young firm's looks and smiles, and Mrs. Washburn was for the first time perceiving the most dangerous obstacle that lay in the way of her plans. Indeed, the young woman's conduct was so unladylike that she felt enraged every time she looked at her, and would scarcely have been able to keep a smiling countenance, but for the amusement with which she saw Miss Seymour's jealousy.

"I really think that will be a match, my dear Miss Seymour," she whispered, with a wicked smile. "Did you ever see a man so enamoured?"

"But she is a mere child," faltered the woman, trying to smile but failing miserably. "She is younger than Mrs. Griffiths. Mr. Langdon and her father were friends."

"Why shouldn't she be younger than Beatrice?" persisted the tormentor. "You and I know, dear, that the older a man gets the younger he wishes his wife to be. As to the father having been his friend that is an excellent reason why he should marry the daughter. Don't you know, dear, that it is only very young men who are wild about women older than themselves. Unless I mistake greatly, there will be a case there," nodding to where Beatrice and Charles Blake sat apart conversing—Beatrice cool, but pleased, her fair hands folded on her lap, her smile coming slowly and melting with a soft, absent light over her pensive face, and her companion sitting by her side, with flashing eyes, his tongue stammering with eagerness, his cheeks glowing with a deep colour, which every little while crept more faintly over his forehead, and his hands grasping whatever they touched.

It seemed destined that this matrimonial drama should be played out at Clarendon House. Both Mr. Griffith and Mrs. Washburn had at once vetoed the proposal for Beatrice's immediate removal, and, after a while, Mr. Langdon consented to their wishes.

He knew that the advent of a new mistress to the house would be the signal for Miss Seymour's departure, and he really pitied his accomplished housekeeper, and wished her to remain as long as possible. Besides, Beatrice and Miss Willis did not seem overfond of each other, and perhaps he met the young lady oftener at Clarendon House than he would be likely to do in his own were his niece once established there. Besides, again, he could there watch the progress of affairs between the heiress and Mr. Griffith, and judge if that gentleman had any designs on Beatrice.

"I won't tease Beatrice to hurry, if you will let me come here as often as I please," he said. "And that will be every day."

"The oftener the better," Mrs. Washburn said, cordially. The girls are out now, but will soon be in."

"Miss Seymour's friends wish her to go then," he continued; "and she thinks of doing so in a few weeks. Beatrice would, perhaps, find it pleasanter to come after she is gone. I confess that I do not think Miss Seymour so amiable as she used to be. Still, I am a little afraid of peculiar influences here for Beatrice."

Mrs. Washburn opened her bright eyes wide.

"Influences, Mr. Langdon. What influences, pray? Do you mean that I am corrupting the child?"

"My dear madam!" cried the gentleman, in dismay. "What a construction you put upon my words. You must be aware that the influence I dread is that of Mr. Sidney Griffith."

"Oh!" said the lady, with a long emphasis on the word, and a pleasant laugh after it. "But really, Mr. Langdon, I think you are too severe on poor Mr. Griffith. He is very fond of Beatrice, and most kind to her. I don't know what possible harm he can do to her."

"That fondness is what I fear," said Mr. Langdon. "I think he always had a liking for her, and would marry her if she were rich. I think he would marry her to-day if he thought that I would give her a fortune."

"Oh, but Mr. Langdon," cried Mrs. Washburn, with an appearance of the greatest surprise, "do you not know that he is next thing to engaged to Maggie Willis? Why, I thought you understood."

"I have Miss Willis's own assurance that there is no engagement," said Mr. Langdon.

"Indeed!" the lady said, gently, suppressing her dismay as best she might. "Maggie is a dreadful flirt, and I think she does not feel sure of Sidney, and likes to seem indifferent to save her pride. Be assured, Mr. Langdon, she would accept him this moment if he were to propose. I think it possible that he hesitates a little."

"I wish that you would assure him of one thing," said Mr. Langdon, warmly. "If he wants to marry a fortune he had better marry Miss Willis; for if he thinks to get a fortune with Beatrice, he will make a great mistake. I shall never make a will till that is sure, if I have to run the risk of leaving her without a shilling. Sidney Griffith shall never be a pound richer for me."

Wishing to hurry matters a little, Mrs. Washburn repeated this conversation to Mr. Griffith.

"The old gentleman is a monomaniac on the subject of his money," he said, quietly. "One can see that he had to earn it. Though if I had earned millions, I should never think so much of them."

"So you see that you will have to marry Maggie," the lady laughed. "It is very evident that is where the trouble lies."

The gentleman sighed.

"But then, Mrs. Washburn, her voice is so harsh."

"Love will soften it."

"And should I really have to live with her?" he asked, in apparent distress.

"Go away," cried the lady, "you put me out of temper."

"I really ought to have gone before," he said, rising. "I must see about some flowers for this evening. Remember that you are to honour me with your company."

"I am not sure that I shall come near you," she said, pettishly.

"Now, Mrs. Washburn," he said, coaxingly. "Don't be vexed. Come in good time, with Miss Willis and Beatrice, and I promise to do as you wish."

"Will you offer yourself to her, and be a good husband?"

"I will propose to her this very night, and make as good a husband as she allows me to be. Good-morning."

When the door had closed after him the half-open door of an inner room was pushed open, and Miss Willis stood within it.

There was a look of sternness upon her young face which lent it a new character, and a line surrounded the scornfully compressed lips, as she came forward, and advanced towards Mrs. Washburn.

"Mercy, Maggie! Where did you come from?" that lady cried, crimson with embarrassment.

"I have been waiting in Beatrice's room for her to come in. We are going out together. Please don't offer me again to Mr. Griffith, Mrs. Washburn."

"You dear child," Mrs. Washburn said—"you mustn't take such things in earnest. I am sorry you overheard, but you must not think Sidney meant what he said. He really admires you, and, being sensitive, I think it annoys him that I should tease him about you. He doesn't like to own to any partiality for you till he feels more confident of success."

"Do you really think so?" asked the young girl, with a cold, keen gaze fixed on the elder lady.

"Certainly I do!" Mrs. Washburn replied, fervently hoping that the heiress might not be lost to them after all.

For one moment the stern look remained on that young face, then it melted into a bright smile.

"Well, I am glad that you do," said Miss Willis, sweetly. "Only don't tell Mr. Griffith I overheard what he said, lest he might think I ought to resent it."

"You are a dear, sensible, amiable girl," cried the delighted lady. "Of course he loves you. How could he help it? I'll say nothing to him about it. He would be in despair if I should. I am so glad you see it in its true light!"

"Here is Beatrice," Miss Willis said. "Beatrice, I have been waiting for some time."

"Come along then," Mrs. Griffith said, just putting her head in at the door.

The two young ladies went out together, and left the elder one to congratulate herself on her narrow escape.

CHAPTER VI.

Learn to win a woman's faith
Nobly, as the thing is high,
Bravely, as in fronting death,
With a virtuous gravity.
By your truth she shall be true,
Ever true, as wives of yore,
And her "Yes," once said,
Shall be yes for ever more.

MR. GRIFFITH's company were artists and literary people mostly, but there was a sprinkling of military and political notables. He gave them light, flowers, a welcome, and—each other. Then there were fruit, cake, tea, coffee, and chocolate, each delicious of its kind.

Those who wished to degrade themselves by over-eating or drinking might do so elsewhere, but not under his chandeliers; and after a while even the most rebellious submitted. For there was no one who knew so well how to dispense with those gross pleasures, and make his guests forget them, as Mr. Griffith did.

However listless, haughty or abstracted he might be at other times, when he received his friends he was most agreeable. A light and airy gaiety seemed to sparkle all about him, and communicate itself to all whom he looked upon or addressed. It did not seem as if he exerted himself to entertain his guests, but rather that he was so delighted to see them that he overflowed with courtesy and joy.

On this evening he was in one of his best moods, looking as though the rich, bright atmosphere had imbued him with a sweet and glowing contentment. A steady and gentle fire burned far back in the soft, strange eyes. The pink lids, even when closed, seemed to smile, so sweet was their closing. The brown of his hair was all hidden in its shadows, and loose rings of moist gold slept about his forehead, and his moustache was one flickering wave of gold across his pale, bright cheeks.

"He looks like a god," whispered Mrs. Washburn, as he playfully shaded his eyes with his hand while bowing before them, when they entered.

The three ladies formed a group not unworthy such a reception. Mrs. Washburn's stately beauty was enhanced by the crimson satin dress she wore and the rich red of her garnet necklace and tiara. On her right stood Miss Willis, looking, for the first time in her life perhaps, like a beauty. Mr. Griffith's first thought was that she was painted, but when he had looked longer and seen the glow of her eyes he acknowledged that it was the girl's own blood that nourished those scarlet roses on her cheek. Her dress was pure white, trimmed with a rich lace, its great length adding what her height needed, and her dark hair was braided into a coronet and pinned with diamonds—diamonds flashed on her bosom and arms, and hung in stars from her ears. She carried herself a little loftily, and Mr. Griffith perceived that it was the heiress who was honouring him with her presence to-night. But she was beautiful; her face with its rosy colour, and the white teeth that glittered through the red lips in a frequent but haughty smile, outshone her jewels. She was far more striking than Beatrice, whom, however, having once looked at, one could scarcely look away from. She also wore white, but it was composed of tulle, so light and airy that one could almost imagine its fading into air; and a veil of tulle fell from the back of her head. She wore no jewels, poor Beatrice. Lascelles had not quite finished copying the pattern of her bracelet; and the only ornament about her was the long green grass that hung with the veil from her hair, and the bunches of the same that looped up her dress at the side. But once look at the melting, wavering colour in her pearly face, at her gliding grace, her lustrous eyes, and one cared little for mere jewels.

"One is a red-cheeked apple, and the other is an apple blossom," a gentleman said, and he was correct.

Visitors arrived, and soon the rooms were full, or as full as the entertainer ever allowed them to be, and Mr. Griffith went from group to group, "catching the spray" he said—or a sweet word here and there, a witticism, a look, a laugh, imparting also a halo of brightness. For whatever fragments he caught he glorified.

"You are too beautiful to-night," he whispered at Miss Willis's shoulder—she was standing a little aside, looking at a vase painted with roses and *flieurs-de-lis*. "I am angry with you. You did it on purpose. I will baffle you though."

She looked up with an air of timidity, then tossed her head, and gave a pouting laugh.

"I must be beautiful, when you can discover it in Mrs. Griffith's presence," she said.

Her voice was really soft, and this apparent jealousy did not detract from her beauty in his eyes.

"You then think my sister-in-law beautiful?" he asked, gently. "It seems to me that she is; but we are never good judges of our own."

"Our own!" repeated Miss Willis, pointedly.

"Certainly! Why not? I have known Beatrice a great many years, long before she married my brother; and since that—three years—I have seen her daily. She seems like my own sister to me. I don't know what I shall do if she persists in going to live with her uncle, unless—"

"Unless what?" asked the young lady, sweetly, ignoring his gaze.

"Unless you will come and live with me, and be more than a sister to me," he said.

She dropped her eyes, and stood turning the bracelet on her arm, the jewels sparkling like fire beneath the brilliant lights.

"Have you no answer for me?" he asked, in a tone of such thrilling softness that, for an instant, she trembled under it and grew pale.

Then she looked up with eyes in which some strange emotion was flashing.

"Why, what do you want me to be?" she asked, passionately.

"I want you for my wife, Maggie!"

"If I gave you my money, wouldn't that do as well?" she asked, bitterly.

He coloured deeply, but said nothing, only looked into her excited face with an expression of reproachful surprise.

"I might find somebody else to take care of me for myself alone," she continued, nervously, tearing her bouquet in pieces. "Indeed, to-day, only a few hours before I came here, somebody did say that he should be proud of me if I were a poor girl without a penny. And I believed him. I daresay that he is not very intellectual or accomplished, or in any way your equal; but I do believe he is in love with me, and that is all I want."

"May I presume to ask what answer you made to his declaration?" asked Mr. Griffith, in his softest voice.

"I made a great many answers," she said, laughing and recovering her self-possession again. "But the last answer was that I would marry him in a month. Ridiculously soon, isn't it?"

And she laughed in his face.

"If I might venture one more question," he insinuated.

"Oh, certainly. If you marry Beatrice, I shall be your aunt. I'm going to be Mrs. James Langdon." She made him a triumphant courtesy, and turned away. "By the way," she whispered over her shoulder, guarding her voice with her fan, "Mr. Langdon is going to live in the same house with me after we are married, and he thinks my voice delightful."

Nobody would have guessed that Mr. Griffith's hand had been contemptuously rejected, to have seen him when he returned to his company. Even Mrs. Washburn could scarcely believe it when he told her.

"What a scrape you have got me into, you wicked woman," he whispered. "Here have I been offering myself to a *fiancee*."

"Impossible!" the lady said, opening her eyes wide.

"My dear match-maker, Miss Willis will be Mrs. James Langdon in a month."

Mrs. Washburn immediately forgot Mr. Griffith's affairs. Miss Willis lingered till the last and whispered a word to her host in parting:

"You may tell Beatrice, if you wish, because she may want to change her mind about going to her uncle's. You may be sure that, whoever goes there, I shall be mistress."

"Such a ridiculous business," Mrs. Washburn exclaimed, when the three were alone. "I am ashamed of your uncle, Beatrice. Why didn't he marry that poor Miss Seymour, who is dying for him? But I am too sleepy to scold. Good-night."

"Stay, Beatrice," said her brother-in-law, softly. She hesitated, then sank back into her chair. "I am so sorry, if you cared for her," she said, looking at him with tender regret.

"If I cared," he laughed. "But I do not care, except to rejoice for my escape; for I believe that nothing but the fact that she overheard me speaking rather discourteously of her saved me from marrying. Now you remain here as before, and we will return to our old happy life again. I am glad. Our plan was ridiculous. You stay here, let me not lose you."

He stepped quickly to her side, flung his arms about her, and drew her to his bosom.

"My darling!" he said, kissing her. "Good-night."

Without daring to look at him, she echoed his good-night, and left him.

When alone once more he began pacing his room like a caged wild animal, stopping now and then to tear down a wreath of flowers, and trample it under his feet.

A fierce bitterness changed the very features of his face, a baffled, tormented look writhed and sparkled in his eyes. The help which he had confidently reckoned upon had failed him. He had no prospects, and could not even pay for the flowers that were dying under his feet.

Presently a new thought struck him like a flash of lightning. He stopped short in his walk, and turned pale as it entered his mind; then, with a shudder, resumed his walk. There was a momentary struggle in his heart between the angels of light and darkness; the evil one prevailed, and the door of heaven closed for ever on the soul of Sidney Griffith.

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

THE "sugar wedding," occurring thirty days after marriage, is the newest fashionable folly.

INDIA-RUBBER INK.—Ink made from india-rubber is the latest invention. It will be used mainly by writers who are inclined to "stretch a story."

THE DUTCHMAN'S BLUNDER.

An old Dutch farmer had a handsome daughter named Minnie, who recently joined a religious persuasion against which the old farmer was somewhat prejudiced.

The young minister, under whose instrumentality Miss Minnie was converted, visiting her frequently, excited his suspicion that all was not right. Accordingly he visited the church one Sunday night, and seated himself unobserved among the congregation.

Soon after taking his seat, the minister, who was preaching from Daniel, 5th chapter, 25th verse, repeated in a loud voice the words of his text, "Mene, mene, tekel upharisim," upon which the old farmer sprang to his feet, seized the affrighted girl by the arm, and hurried her out of the meeting-house. Having reached the churchyard, he gave vent to his feelings in the following words:

"I know dere is somethings wrong, and now I schwares to 'em."

"Why, father, what do you mean?" replied the bewildered and innocent girl.

"Didn't I," shouted the old man, striking his fists together and stamping with his foot—"didn't I hear de parson call out to you, 'Minnie, Minnie, tickle de parson?'"

"How odd it is," said Pat, as he trudged along on foot one hot sultry day, "that a man never meets a cart going the same way he is."

HOOP-POLES.—"What are those, father?" asked a simpering young lady of her parent. "A load of hoop-poles, my dear." "Why, I thought the new style of dresses had spoilt trade in those articles," remarked the innocent creature.

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE.—A handsome young bride was observed to be in deep reflection on her wedding-day. One of her bridesmaids asked her the subject of her meditation. "I was thinking," she replied, "which of my beaux I should marry if I should become a widow."

A BACHELOR'S REASON FOR NOT MARRYING.—An old bachelor, with gray hairs, was asked why he did not marry? "I will tell you," said he; "while I was young I waited till I was older; and now I am old I cannot get a wife, for I don't admire old women, and young women do not admire me."

A POTATO-TRAP.—Of O'Connell there is a story told which has yet probably never been recorded. He was speaking in Dublin on some public occasion when he was very much interrupted by a person who had made himself known for his opposition to him. O'Connell bore it all very quietly for a considerable time, while this person was amusing him-

self knocking with his stick, making horrible noises with his mouth, and in short doing everything to counteract the effect of the labours of one of Ireland's greatest orators. O'Connell seemed quite to keep his temper through all this, and at last, smiling good humouredly, asked, "Will nobody put a potato in that fellow's mouth?" Nothing could be better, and nothing could delight an Irish audience more than this manifestation of perfect good-humour. The opponent was rather ignominiously show the direction of the door, and departed "a wiser and a sadder man."

AN EXAMPLE.—"Well," said an old gentleman, the other day, "I have been forty-seven years in the business, and can say what very few can after such experience; in all that time, my friend, I never disappointed but one single creditor." "Bless me, what an example for our young mercantile community!" replied the person addressed; "what a pity that one time occurred; how was it?" "Why," responded the old gentleman, "I paid the debt when it became due, and I never, in all my life, saw a man so astonished as the creditor was."

SAYINGS AT SPITHEAD.

Reviewing the Review.

Says Ben to me, when Nelson fought

Our ships were hearts of oak,

By canvas then they came to port,

And not by steam and smoke.

We knew not then no Armstrong gun,

Of which I hear such praise:

Yet many a tough sea-fight we won

In them old-fashioned days!

Says I to Ben, the ships may change,

And sail give way to screw;

Tho' guns be made of longer range,

Our tars are still True Blue!

And should the dogs of war break out,

Full soon you find, I say,

That British tars have hearts as stout

As in the good old days! *Punch.*

A SMART MISS.—A girl purchased a pair of boots. After wearing them one day she found that they had broken out. She took them back to the man she had bought them of, and, after examining them, he said: "They were not taken in enough, were they?" "No," she replied, "but I was." The shopman smiled.

A PHOTOGRAPHIC BLUNDER.

A very laughable incident occurred recently at one of the photographic galleries in Maryville, Cal. A country gentleman went in to get his two boys taken. In order to have the boys properly prepared, he asked for a basin of water to wash their faces.

The artist informed the customer that he would find a wash dish in the other room, and he retired and gave both boys a clean wash.

After the pictures were taken it was noticed that the lads began to grow black in the face, and continued to grow blacker and blacker.

The true state of the case immediately occurred to the operator: the boys had washed their faces in the wrong dish—a basin of chemicals prepared for pictures. The silver wash was turning the faces of the boys blacker and blacker, and there was no other way than to let the chemicals perfect their work.

The gentleman left with his boys, and by the time he reached home his wife had a couple of nice mulatto children.

PERSEVERANCE.—"Persevere, persevere," said an old lady to her maid; "it's the only way you can accomplish great things." One day eight apple-dumplings were sent downstairs, and they all disappeared. "Sally, where are those dumplings?" "I managed to get through them, ma'am," replied Sally. "Why, how on earth did you manage to eat so many dumplings?"—"I persevered, ma'am."

TWO BUCKETS.

A great deal of trouble is "borrowed" by the habit of looking at things "wrong end foremost."

"How disconsolate you look," said a bucket to his fellow-bucket as they were going to the well.

"Ah," replied the other, "I was reflecting on the uselessness of our being filled; for let us go away ever so full we always come back empty."

"Dear me! how strange to look at it in that way," said the bucket. "Now I enjoy the thought that however empty we come we always go away full. Only look at it in that light, and you'll be as cheerful as I am."

GROWING CHEAPER.—The following anecdote was related by Mr. Case, recently, in a speech in Parliament: When he was in America before the war he spent all the time he could among the slaves. He was introduced to one who was very rich, and abundantly able to buy his freedom. He asked him why

he did not do so. "No hurry 'bout dat," said the sagacious darkey, "Ize groin' older eb'ry day, and growin' cheaper."

WHAT is the difference between a railway train and a suspending bank?—In one case the brake causes the stoppage, in the other the stoppage causes the break.—*Fun.*

SPONSOR AND RESPONSE, SIR.

Godpapa (who was a little remiss at the christening):

"Well, my boy, you know your catechism, I suppose. Yes! Well, what did your godfathers then do for you?"

Smart Child: "Why, one of 'em gave me a silver mug, and the other—didn't!"—*Fun.*

A HINT FOR CRITICS.—When an author gibbets himself as an ignorant and pretensions miff, what is the use of cutting him up? It would be more humane to cut him down and try to restore him to his senses.—*Fun.*

HOD, RATHER!

Irate Bricklayer (who has taken offence at some remark of Pat's): "You jist come down 'ere an' I'll black yer two eyes for ye!"

Pat (on the ladder): "Faith, thin, me frind, ye're kind insade; but it wouldn't be comin' down I'd be if ye offered me twice as much!"—*Fun.*

A PRETTY TURN-OUT!—The car-drivers of Cork are on strike. The municipal authorities having reduced the rate of fares, the men have adopted the plan of not plying on Sundays. Of course, like true Irishmen, they call the strike a "turn-out," for the obvious reason that they don't turn-out!—*Fun.*

A STEED OF A DIFFERENT COMPLEXION.

Urchin: "Please, sir, Tommy's a-cryin' to go to school!"

Venerable Party: "Very creditable to him, indeed, and shows a very proper desire for learning; but what is it that prevents his going?"

Urchin: "Oh, sir, please, he ain't a-cryin' cos he wants to go, but cos he don't want to go!"—*Fun.*

FEAT UNIQUE.—The performances of our sportsmen this August have not been very brilliant, with one remarkable exception—a great gun of Macmillan's has been successful in "Shooting Niagara" at Chelsea.—*Punch.*

"MUSIC HATH CHARMS."

Chief Clerk in H. M. Deputy-Assistant-Secretary's Inland Revenue Office: "Hullo, Mr. Dumbledore! What have you got there? Dispatches?"

Dumbledore (who plays in the Civil Service Amateur Orchestra): "No, sir, it's my double bass contrabasso, sir! We've a rehearsal to-night, sir."

Chief: "Ah, just so; well (sees an opening), yes, s'long as you don't ki' up a row here, you know, 'r else we'd rather you had forgot it, you know." (Retires chuckling).—*Punch.*

PLEASURES OF TRAVELLING WITH YOUR FAMILY.

Excited and Anxious Parent: "Now, we've five minutes more; is there anything else you want?"

Considerate Daughter: "Only the Times and Punch, and the Post and Once a Week, papa dear; and see if they are going to move the luggage again, and then you can come and have your luncheon, you know"—*Punch.*

THE RACE NOT YET EXTINGUISHED.

Country Excursionist (just landed at G. W. Terminus): "Could you inform me what these 'ere busses charge from Paddington to the Bank?"

Dundreary (with an effort): "Au-h, po' m'soul, haven't an idea-h! Never wode 'n one in m'life. Should say a mere twifle. P'waps a shilling, or two shillings. 'Don't think the wascals could have the conscience to charge you more than three shillings. 'Wouldn't pay more than four. I'd see 'em at the d-d-doo-ooce!"—*Punch.*

RUINOUS EXPENDITURE.—The extravagance of the ladies in their dress is growing more and more fearful, judging by a Price List (wonderfully illustrated), one of the articles in which is the "Gemma," or "Jewelled" Japon!—*Punch.*

BLACK V. WHITE.—A woman-hater of Mr. Punch's acquaintance declares that the substitution of brown for blonde complexions and tresses is bringing Black-bait into fashion instead of White-bait.—*Punch.*

SPECIAL! URGENT!! IMMEDIATE!!!

MR. PUNCH,

I write to you under the influence of the greatest excitement. I am fresh from the top of a Brompton and Islington omnibus. We have just cleared Hyde Park Corner. What did we see? A ladder reared against the equestrian effigy of the late and the great Duke of Wellington! A rope thrown over the body of his steed! You will not be surprised when I tell you that the moment this welcome sight met our gladdened vision we all, my fellow-travellers and

myself, rose to our feet, gave one long, one loud, one apoplectic cheer, and then sat down again. We could talk of nothing else all the rest of the expedition. Is the long-expected, happy day come at last? Is the statue coming down? Please to communicate instantly with the First Commissioner of Busts and Statues that we may make extensive preparations for a general illumination.

Yours hysterically,
—Punch.
A DAILY SUFFERER.

THE PEARL FISHERIES.

THERE is no necessity for me to give an account of the pearl fishery. That has been done frequently already. But before giving some extracts from a private letter, kindly placed at my disposal, perhaps it will be as well if I give a short account of the circumstances which called for the inquiry. I need not say that the pearl-oyster is no oyster at all, but belongs to the genus *Avicular* of class *Conchifera* of the Mollusca. It rejoices in the name *Avicula margaritifera*, or *Meleagrina margar*, Lamarck, or *Mytilus margar*, Linnaeus.

It is well known of what importance and what a fertile source of revenue the pearl-fishery is to Ceylon. For some years the fishery gradually lost its lucrativeness, until at length the oysters disappeared from the beds. In consequence of this Mr. E. W. H. Holdsworth was sent out as naturalist to see what could be done. The chief questions which required solution would seem to be—first, what were the causes which led to the disappearance of the oysters—secondly, what could be done to obtain oysters on the beds again—thirdly, what rules must in future be observed in fishing so as to prevent a similar misfortune. It is evident that this last question will involve a thorough investigation of the habits of the pearl-oyster. It is, therefore, interesting to the lover of natural history to know that there is a prospect of something being done in this direction. Mr. Holdsworth went out in October, 1865, and after more than a year of difficulties and disappointments he is able to say, in a letter, dated March, 1867, which I am allowed to quote:

"The pearl-oysters have again made their appearance on the Ceylon banks. Two patches of ground—one half a mile square, the other a mile square—are covered with young oysters, as thickly as they can well be placed. They are, however, very young, ranging from about two weeks to two months old, being much younger than any of the present fishery officials have seen; so that there is a prospect of ascertaining the rate of growth, if these young creatures remain on the banks. To know the age of an oyster when it is found is one of the most important matters in connection with the fishery, since the oyster should be taken just when it arrives at maturity, and just before it dies, which it is said to do when six or seven years old."

H. P.

THE "SEALED BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER."—In the library of the House of Lords has been found the original copy of the "Sealed Book of Common Prayer" which has been so long missing. It is found in the manuscript that the bishops had ordered that the Communion Tables should stand at the east end of the chancel, and that the celebrant should stand eastward; but they subsequently erased the rubrics.

JEFFERSON DAVIS IN CANADA.—Jefferson Davis is still in Canada, and is received with great consideration by the people wherever he goes. On the 18th of July he visited the Theatre Royal at Montreal, on the occasion of a performance given there for the benefit of the suffering people of the South. The theatre was densely crowded, and Mr. Davis, on making his appearance, was loudly cheered. He rose and bowed his acknowledgments, and this was the signal for a renewal of the outburst. Someone shouted out, "We shall live to see the South a nation yet" and this produced farther cheering. "The Bonnie Blue Flag" and "Dixie," both well-known Southern rallying tunes, were called for and played by the band, and it was fully half an hour before the tumult was stilled and the play began.

CAUSES OF DEATH.—In his customary letter, addressed to the Registrar-General on the causes of death in England during the year 1866, Dr. Farr discussed at some length the defects of the present system of death registration, of which the large number of deaths returned from causes not specified or ill defined formed one of the strongest evidences. Of the total deaths registered in that year, amounting to 495,531, no less than 7,799 had no causes whatever assigned, although about 3,321 of these, having been sudden, were inquired into by coroners, who were nevertheless unsuccessful in ascertaining the cause. In 1865 the total deaths were 490,909, the

numbers returned from unassigned causes being 8,400, of which 3,173 were the subjects of coroners' inquiries. From these facts the unsatisfactory inference follows that, as with a reduced aggregate of deaths from all causes an increase has taken place in the causes not specified, there has been some laxity either of observation or record, which is much to be regretted. Bearing in mind that death takes place in so many ways, often under conditions unfavourable to observation, a margin must of necessity be allowed for cases which baffle the attempt to refer their phenomena to definite laws; but the inquiry into the cause of death is so important in a social as well as in a scientific point of view, that no means of making it successful should be neglected, and we shall no doubt have eventually to come to some such organization as has been suggested by Dr. Farr if we would hope to attain the end desired.

JE SUIS AIMEE.

My heart is light as a bird to-night,
That flies to her nest in the soft twilight
And sings in her brooding bliss;
Ah! I so low and he so high,
What could he find to love? I cry—
Did ever love stoop so low as this?

As a miser jealously counts his gold,
I sit and dream of my wealth untold,
From the curious world apart;
Too sacred my joy for another eye,
I treasure it tenderly, silently,
And hide it away in my heart.

Dearer to me than the costliest crown
That ever on queenly forehead shone,
Is the kiss he left on my brow;
Would I change his smile for a royal gem?
His love for a monarch's diadem?
Change it? You wrong me thinking so.

My heart sings like a bird to-night,
And flies away to its nest of light,
To brood o'er its living bliss;
Ah! I so low, and he so high,
What could he find to love? I cry—
Did ever love stoop so low as this?

M. H.

GEMS.

FEW things are more necessary to success in life than decision of character. With it a man can rarely fail—without it he can rarely succeed.

REJECT with indignant scorn all self-congratulation of conscious villany, though they be uttered by Richard or Iago.

THE repentance that is delayed until old age is but too often a regret for the inability of committing more sins.

REASON can never show itself more reasonable than in ceasing to reason about things which are above reason.

FAST horses live longer than fast women or men. The life of a fast horse is ten years; of a fast woman three, and of a fast man seven. They all trot to the winning-post at a killing pace—the women ahead, of course.

LADIES who talk as if the ground was not good enough for their fastidious feet—and such are seen daily in our streets—are commonly found to be very feeble in the head. Nature forces the brains to one extremity or the other.

THE lessons of adversity are often the most benignant when they seem the most severe. The depression of vanity sometimes ennobles the feeling. The mind which does not wholly sink under misfortune rises above it more loftily than before, and is strengthened by affliction.

WHO ARE HAPPY?—Lord Byron said: "The mechanics and working men who can maintain their families are, in my opinion, the happiest body of men. Poverty is wretchedness, but even poverty is, perhaps, to be preferred to the heartless, unmeaning dissipation of high order." Another author says: "I have no propensity to envy anyone, least of all the rich and great; but if I were disposed to this weakness the subject of my envy would be a healthy young man, in full possession of his strength and faculties, going forth in the morning to work for his wife and children, or bringing them home his wages at night."

A RELIC OF THE FIRST FRENCH EMPIRE.—An old soldier of the First Empire, named Darroy, has lately died at the Invalides, aged 90. He served in Egypt under Kleber, and was present as sentinel during the execution of Soliman, the murder of that

general at Cairo, in June, 1800. Soliman first had his right hand consumed on a slow fire, and was then placed on an iron hurdle, with embers under it, where he remained living for four hours. Being tortured with thirst, he asked to drink, but this was refused him, as it might have shortened his sufferings. Darroy, who was then a volunteer in the Egyptian service, was, however, touched with compassion and gave the dying man a glass of water. Soliman drank it off at one draught, and then fell back and expired.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

BRAN, dusted over joints of meat when hung, will keep them good for an extra time.

FRENCH RASPBERRY VINEGAR.—Take a sufficiency of the ripe berries, and mash them well. Then pour the juice and mashed fruit into a bag, and press the liquor through it into a vessel. To each quart of juice take one pound of white sugar, and one pint of the best vinegar. Mix together the juice and vinegar, and give them a boil; when boiled, add in—gradually—the sugar, and boil and skim until the scum ceases to rise. Cork tightly, and stow away in a cool place.

GINGER-BEER.—The following is a very good way to make it: Take of ginger, bruised or sliced, one ounce and a half; cream of tartar one ounce, loaf sugar one pound; one lemon sliced; put them into a pan, and pour six quarts of boiling water upon them. When nearly cold put in a little yeast, and stir for about a minute; let it stand until next day, then strain and bottle it; it is fit to drink in three days, but will not keep good longer than a fortnight. The cork should be tied down, and the bottles placed upright in a cool place.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MRS. CLAYTON has lately died at Springhead, near Gravesend, aged 107 years and seven months.

THE LARGEST ORGAN.—The largest organ in the world is in Ulm. It has one hundred stops.

A YOUNG Norwegian in Wisconsin is seven feet ten inches in height.

There is at last a talk of giving the Volunteers the Snider rifle.

THERE is only one freeman of the city of Winchester and only three freemen of the town of Southampton now living.

PARISIAN ON DITS.—Since the commencement of the year, forty-five Sovereigns and Princes, three Queens, and ten Princesses, have visited Paris.

LITTLE children are now making the ascents of the great mountains in Switzerland. Christine Iselin, aged seven, and her sister, aged five, have just ascended the Schilt, 7,620 feet high.

A DARING LEAP.—Professor Worthington, the Sensational Diver, made the extraordinary leap of 130 feet into the sea, from a pole fixed at the head of the Chain Pier, Brighton, in the presence of thousands of spectators.

OUT of the magnificent sum of 1,200l. which the Government gives annually in literary pensions no less than 710l. fell to the lot of the ladies last year. Among the male recipients Mr. R. Young, the Irish "poet," figures for 40l.

STATUE OF NAPOLEON I.—A statue of Napoleon I. was inaugurated on the 18th ult., at Montreaux. It will stand on the very spot where the Emperor uttered the words, "The bullet which is to kill me is not yet cast."

EARL VANE AND THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.—The Emperor of Russia has conferred on Earl Vane the Order of St. Alexander, one of the highest honours in Russia; indeed, the very highest that could be presented to one who had not been invested with the Garter.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINES.—The select committee on mines have reported, and propose that not more than 100 men shall be allowed to work in one mine without permission from the Secretary of State; also that the number of inspectors be increased.

THE LOSSES OF THE PRUSSIAN ARMY IN THE LATE WAR.—The losses of the Prussian army in the late war were as follows:—Total number of wounded, 669 officers and 15,508 men; of those who remained on the field, 178 officers and 2,753 men; of those who died of their wounds, 64 officers and 1,435 men; and of those who died of illnesses contracted during the campaign, 53 officers and 6,734 men. The total loss amounts to 315 officers, 10,562 men, and 6,490 horses. The number of officers wounded was relatively twice as great as that of the private soldiers.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A WEEKLY TENANT.—The landlord can claim back rent of the assignee of the tenant.

PETER.—James Boswell, the biographer of Dr. Johnson, was born in 1740, and died June 19, 1795.

W. C. (Woolwich).—Your landlady cannot be compelled to deliver up your goods until payment of the amount due to her be made.

DRAWDE.—If a legatee die before the testator—the person who makes the will—the legacy is void, by what lawyers call "lapse."

E. F.—An infant—that is, a youth under the age of twenty-one—cannot legally bind himself without the concurrence of his parent or guardian.

CORNET.—As you value your health attempt no tricks with your lips, excepting an ordinary lip salve, with which any chemist will supply you.

MABLE.—Avoirdupois is a kind of weight of which a pound contains sixteen ounces, and is in proportion to a pound troy as seventeen to fourteen.

J. E. MARTIN.—The story you mention is not published in volume form; you can, however, obtain it in numbers or monthly parts by application to the publisher.

FLORENCE.—An easy method of removing wine stains from table cloths is to hold the stained part in milk while it is boiling on the fire; the stains will soon disappear.

ANTIE.—1. The letter *y* in the name *Plontagier* has a soft sound, and it should be pronounced as if spelled *Pian-tre-gier*. 2. Handwriting good, but rather too slanting.

LITTLE FLIRT asks us for a recipe for blushing. If "Little Flirt" were not a little flirt she would desire no such recipe, since "blushing" has ever been considered a sign of modesty in a female.

ADA BROOKS.—1. Your handwriting is good, but practice frequently, by which means you will acquire greater freedom. 2. Answers will appear within three weeks from the time of insertion.

AGATHA.—Furniture purchased by a mother for her daughter and son-in-law will be liable for rent; but whether it will be subject to the claims of ordinary creditors depends upon several contingencies.

A. B.—If the house was bought without notice of the mortgage, and the mortgagee has put in no claim for nine years, and the mortgage is not to be found, we do not see how the mortgagee's descendants can recover.

A READER.—If you have not heard of your husband for fifteen years you would not, if he were to reappear, be punished for bigamy. But if he were alive at the time of the second marriage this would be void nevertheless.

E. B.—If you desire to change your hair from dark brown to golden consult a hairdresser, who will effect the operation for a moderate fee. "E. B." however, is probably not aware that golden hair is "going out," and that a brunette and dark hair is the prevailing fashion.

GEORGE.—Side swimming is the most scientific and elegant mode of swimming, and also the most rapid, effective, and useful. The reason why it is more rapid is that the body in that position offers less resistance to the water. A side swimmer can progress against a tide, which is very difficult to breast.

J. G.—Your handwriting is befitting an apprentice to a scrivener—that is to say, it is good, clear, and orthographically correct. We think you have a good cause of complaint against the master who received you under indentures and has since changed the business to which you were bound to learn. Consult a solicitor, but be sure you go to a respectable one.

AN ACUTE SUFFERER.—To relieve corns procure a few young ivy leaves, steep them in vinegar for twenty-four hours, apply some to the corn, and secure by means of a small piece of thread or cotton; for bunions take twelve grains of iodine, half an ounce of lard or spermaceti ointment, mix together; rub this to the part affected twice or thrice a day.

MAGGIE.—A pint and a half of corn should keep a full-grown Dorking fowl during a week with no other help than what it obtains itself among the grass and shrubberies; half the quantity would be sufficient in a farmyard where there is threshing going on. Ground food is better and cheaper than whole food, and oats are better than barley; the whole of the corn should be ground and nothing taken from it.

LUCK.—A person of slovenly habits has always deservedly been exposed to the contempt of all right-minded people. Such a person is seldom distinguished for any great intellectual or moral qualities, and has very little chance of rising in life. There is an honest pride in keeping ourselves neat

and clean, however poor we may be. A thread-bare coat or fustian jacket, if clean and tidy, is no dishonour. How often can we truly judge of the happy or miserable condition of a family from the appearance of their home? If it be clean and neat, and the furniture well arranged, we may expect to find in it an agreeable and happy family; but if, on the contrary, disorder prevail, and everything wear a slovenly look, we may reasonably conclude that there domestic happiness has no place. A comfortable home has a great attraction for most men, but especially for the working class.

W. S. M.—The disease known as ringworm, which appears about the head and neck of young cattle, in the form of whitish-dry scurfy spots, can be removed by rubbing the parts affected with iodine ointment. As this disease is easily communicated to the human subject the person dressing the cattle should wash his hands with soap and hot water after each application of the ointment.

A LOVER OF LEARNING.—1. The nearest public school to Kensington is St. Mark's College, Brompton. The terms of this college are very moderate. You cannot, however, take lessons in French alone, but must enter as a regular student. 2. In every district of London there are professors of the French language who will teach you at the rate of ten or twelve shillings per quarter; indeed in most neighbourhoods there are regular French classes.

BALDWIN.—The office of champion was established by William the Conqueror. The male descendants of Marston were the first champions of England, and the manor of Scrivelby, in Lincolnshire, was won by the first of these knights. De Ludlow received the office and manor through the female line; next, in the reign of Richard II., Sir John Dymoke succeeded, also through the female line, and the office has remained in the male line of the Dymoke family ever since.

GERTRUDE.—1. To strengthen the hair distil as coolly and slowly as possible 2 lbs. of honey, a handful of rosemary, and 12 handfuls of the carlines or tendrils of grape vines, infused in a gallon of new milk, from which about 2 quarts of liquid will be obtained; rub a little of this every morning into the roots of the hair. 2. A good preparation for cleansing the teeth may be made by taking 1 oz. of powdered myrrh, 2 spoonfuls of the best white honey, and a little green sage powdered very finely; mix all this well together, and wet the teeth and gums with a little every night and morning. 3. Handwriting pretty and ladylike.

NOT YET.

Can we forget the hearts which have deceived us.

The dreams that only waken bitterest regret?

Let who can say, "Good-bye, the ill that grieved us!"

But oh! can we forget—forget—forget?

Can we forget the longing and the yearning?

The agony, the struggle, and the sin?

The golden hours which never knew returning.

And all that might have been—that might have been?

Can we forget the hope that brought but sorrow.

The sweet, sweet hope that ended but in tears?

Oh, we look hoped for the for the to-morrow.

Remembering the glory of the vanished years.

Oh, say can we forget the lips that blessed us?

The thousand heart-aches, and the broken dreams forget?

Can we forget the dear arms that caressed us?

"Not yet," our cheated hearts cry out, "not yet!"

R. S.

E. M., eighteen, medium height, rather fair, blue eyes, and good tempered. Respondent must be about twenty, 5 ft., black hair, good tempered, and a working man.

F. L. COOK, medium height, dark, good tempered, and fond of home. Respondent must be dark, about thirty, and a working man.

MARIE, nineteen, brown hair, blue eyes, and domesticated. Respondent must be in good circumstances, and about twenty-six.

MAR, eighteen, a blonde, golden hair, blue eyes, and will have a hundred pounds on her marriage. Respondent must be tall and fair.

FRED ASLEY, twenty-four, 5 ft. 7 in., good looking, and a professional. Respondent must be well educated, amiable, and have some property.

JAMES WILLIAM, twenty-six, tall, fair, and in a good business. Respondent must have a knowledge of the millinery business and a little money.

CONSTANT, eighteen, 5 ft. 10 in., fair, slight moustache, well educated, and good tempered. Respondent must be about his own age, well educated, and a brunette.

ALFRED VANCE, twenty-one, 5 ft. 8 in., light hair, and black eyes. Respondent must have blue eyes and golden hair.

A COUNTRY GIRL, eighteen, medium height, fair, brown hair, gray eyes, an fond of home and children. Respondent must be a steady, respectable tradesman about twenty.

VIOLETTA, seventeen, 5 ft. 6 in., fair, dark blue eyes, brown hair, and pretty. Respondent must be fair, about nineteen or twenty, in a good situation, and have a little money.

T. G. (Hackney), twenty-four, 5 ft. 4 in., dark, and 25s. per week. Respondent must be about nineteen or twenty-one, tall, dark, and a little money would not be unacceptable.

LIZZIE and ETTA.—"Lizzie," twenty-five, 5 ft. 3 in., very dark hair and eyes, and fond of home. "Etta," twenty-one, 5 ft. 3 in., light brown hair and eyes, and also fond of home. Respondents must be tall, affectionate, and fond of home.

MIRNIE, twenty-five, medium height, fair, dark Auburn hair, blue eyes, and well educated. Respondent must be tall, dark, and not under thirty. (Handwriting good and distinct.)

AUGUSTE and BIRDIE.—"Auguste," twenty-one, tall, dark hair and eyes. "Birdie," nineteen, tall, brown hair, and soft brown eyes; both good tempered, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondents must be fair, and not under thirty.

ALEXANDER.—We believe that nature never produces double flowers; they are considered among botanists as beautiful monsters. They are generally, indeed we may say always, the production of skilful management on the part of the cultivator. The Dutch gardeners have been very successful in this kind of production. The principle of doing it is to keep the plant growing rather stunted on poor soil

until all the organs of flowering are beginning to show themselves, then pushing it by liberal watering with liquid manures. This operation is founded upon the physiological habits of plants. The first extension of the plant is to attain its growth, then it sends forth flowers, and then its whole energy is bent on maturing and perfecting the seed; this seems to be the grand end and object of its existence; this accomplished it ceases any farther action, for the current season at least.

REGINALD.—It is a well-known fact among scientific men that there exists in every animal body, and in most vegetables, a certain quantity of phosphorus. This principle is extremely active, and has a strong tendency to unite with the pure part of common air. During that separation, therefore, of the parts of bodies which takes place in an incipient putrefaction these phosphoric particles are detached from those with which they are combined, and, by the action of the air, a degree of combustion takes place, but so extremely faint that light only is produced without the least appearance of sensible heat.

LA-MORA.—The expectation of loving our friends in heaven doubtless principally kindles our love for them on earth. If we thought we should never know, and consequently never be able to love them hereafter, we should number them with temporal things, and love them only as such; but in the firm persuasion that we shall live and converse with them in a future world our intercourse with them here is strengthened and rendered happy. We can take comfort in those who are dead or absent, believing that we shall meet them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love.

G. BAXTER.—All appointments to offices under Government are, with few exceptions, in the gift of the political and other heads of departments for the time being. From these only all nominations must directly or indirectly be obtained; many imagine that the Civil Service is thrown open to public competition, and the necessary preliminary of being nominated to an office a mere official form; but this is a delusion. The only difference that exists between the old and the new system is this, that in the former case the Minister nominated one candidate to each vacancy, who immediately received his appointment; he now nominates three or four, and a competitive examination takes place, and he who passes best obtains the situation.

HELEN.—The man or woman who does not love children, the heart that can listen to their innocent prattle, or look into their sweet eyes, which are the avenues to their sinless souls, without feeling the refreshing influence of such companionship, is greatly to be pitied. There are such, we know, in the world, and worthy members of society perhaps in the ordinary sense of the word, but they are like those whom the poet describes as having

"No music in their souls,

Fit for treason, stratagem, and spoils."

It will not do to say that important life duties absorb their whole attention. There is a time for all things—a time for business, for devotion, for recreation—and what pure or better recreation can a great mind have than the unbending of itself with a little child? It is not gravely or weighty duties that prevent anyone from enjoying such a relaxation; it is selfishness—intense selfishness.

POETRY.—"Steel and Gold" and "The Merry Hearts," by R. W. T. B., are dedicated with thanks, for although they contain some good ideas they are faulty in rhyme and metre, therefore unsuitable for our columns.

R. S.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:
LOVING STUDENT is responded to by—"Sally."
MARK LOFTON by—"Annie May," twenty, tall, fair, and good looking.

ELLEN B. by—"Sheffield Girl," twenty-three, tall, amiable, and would make home happy.

Tom G. by—"Ellen," twenty, tall, fair, brown hair, and blue eyes—"Maggie" (Norwood), tall, and fair; and—"Kate Howard," nineteen, 5 ft. 4 in., fair, and gray eyes.

Tom S. and Tom G. by—"Mary" and "May," "Mary," eighteen, fair, dark brown hair, and blue eyes. "May," seventeen, dark hair and eyes, and thinks "Tom S." would suit her.

SAM S. by—"Tilly," twenty, 5 ft., fair, dark brown hair, and blue eyes—"Evelyn," 5 ft., fair, dark brown hair, and blue eyes; and—"Ellen Montgomery," nineteen, 5 ft. 5 in., dark brown hair and eyes.

OLIVER DARVEL by—"Maudie," twenty, medium height, dark, and pleasing manners. (Handwriting clear, distinct, and ladylike.)—"Louise," seventeen, 5 ft. 3 in., fair, brown hair, gray eyes, and domesticated; and—"Agnes," nineteen, medium height, dark hair, gray eyes, and thoroughly domesticated.

JULIA by—"Arab," 5 ft. 11 in.

LOVING LITTLE TOMMY by—"Leonard."

EVA by—"Frank," tall, dark, and not bad looking.

ALICIA C. MOSS ROSE, or CAROLINE M. by—"Lonesome Jack," "Louisa, or EMILY by—"Bristol George," thirty, 5 ft. 7 in., brown hair, gray eyes, and respectfully connected.

LADY ELLA by—"Spes" (a young tradesman), twenty-three, 5 ft. 10 in., dark hair and eyes, and with an annual income of 300l. to 400l.

LEAH MORTIMER by—"Wilbur," twenty-three, 5 ft. 11 in., dark, and the son of a Field Officer—"William Marshall," middle age, and has been about twenty-five years; and—"Siacety," twenty-two, medium height, brown hair and eyes, and good looking.

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